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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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China and India pledge to be 'partners, not rivals'

Modi, Xi agree not to allow border issue define ties

TIANJIN, 31 AUG

In a diplomatic breakthrough, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin, marking Modi's first visit to China in seven years. The leaders welcomed the steady improvement in bilateral ties since their last meeting at the BRICS summit in Russia, asserting that India and China are "partners, not rivals" and that differences must not escalate into disputes.

> **A stable relationship and cooperation between India and China and their 2.8 billion people on the basis of mutual respect, mutual interest and mutual sensitivity are necessary for the growth and development of the two countries**
>
> —Narendra Modi, PM, India

Both leaders noted deepening trust after years of tension, including a long-running border dispute and the deadly 2020 Galwan Valley clashes. Modi declared there is now an "atmosphere of peace and stability," while Xi emphasised that the relationship should be viewed from a "strategic height and long-term perspective."

A major announcement was the resumption of direct flights between India and China, which had been suspended since the pandemic. Modi also discussed the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and the reinstatement of tourist visas, both resumed earlier this year. Xi welcomed these steps and reiterated that China and India, as major Global South powers, must work together for their people's welfare.

PM Narendra Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the SCO Summit at Tianjin Meijiang Convention Centre in Tianjin **PHOTO: PTI**

The leaders agreed not to allow the border issue to define the overall relationship and pledged to promote peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Border trade,

> **It is the right choice for both to be friends who have good neighbourly and amicable ties, partners who enable each other's success, and to have the dragon and the elephant dance together**
>
> —Xi Jinping, Chinese President

suspended since 2020, will also resume, following recent foreign minister-level talks. China further assured support for India's demand for critical imports like rare earths, fertilisers, and tunnel-boring machines.

Modi underscored the need for strategic autonomy, asserting bilateral ties must not be viewed through the lens of any third country. In a key discussion point, he raised the issue of cross-border terrorism from Pakistan, to which Xi responded with support for India.

The meeting comes amid souring India-US ties, worsened by President Trump's tariffs on Indian goods over Russian oil imports. With Putin also attending the SCO summit, overshadowed by global trade tensions and the Ukraine war, India's pivot towards China has raised alarms in Washington.

As the two most populous nations and growing economies, deeper India-China cooperation could yield mutual benefits, from boosting India's EV sector to expanding China's market access.

The largely symbolic SCO summit, the largest since its inception in 2001, saw over 20 leaders gather in Tianjin, where the event has gripped the public imagination despite travel restrictions and crowd control measures. *—PTI*

Cong alleges EC ignored 89L plaints against SIR

Congress leader Pawan Khera addresses a press conference in Patna on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

PATNA, 31 AUG

Senior Congress leader Pawan Khera on Sunday alleged that 89 lakh complaints flagged by the party's Booth Level Agents (BLAs) during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Bihar's electoral rolls were dismissed by the Election Commission (EC), raising serious questions about the process's transparency.

At a press conference, Khera accused the EC of rejecting complaints on the grounds that only individuals, not political parties, could file objections. He demanded the entire SIR exercise be redone, claiming large-scale deletions and irregularities.

Khera said 65 lakh names were removed from the rolls across 90,540 booths, including 25 lakh due to migration and 22 lakh deceased voters. He highlighted concerning figures — 7,613 booths had over 70% of women's names deleted, and 635 booths saw 75% of female migrant names erased. He also flagged alleged duplicate voter IDs.

However, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Bihar rebutted the claims, stating that no authorised BLA from Congress had submitted valid objections in the prescribed format. The draft rolls published on August 1 are open for scrutiny and corrections, the CEO added.

65 LAKH
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On alleged duplications, the EC clarified that flagged entries via ERONET 2.0 undergo ground verification and are not automatically deleted. Demographic similarities, especially in rural Bihar, do not prove duplication without field inquiry. The CEO said the SIR process remains open for objections and urged stakeholders to use formal channels for redressal. *—PTI*

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Plea in SC seeks rules to regulate political parties

New Delhi, 31 Aug

A plea filed in the Supreme Court has urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to frame rules for the registration and regulation of political parties to promote secularism, transparency, and political justice.

Filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, the petition highlights the rise of "bogus political parties" appointing criminals as office-bearers after accepting large sums of money. It also cited a media report about a fake party allegedly converting black money into white for a 20% commission.

The plea contends that the absence of regulation enables misuse and calls for the Law Commission to study global best practices. It argues that such regulation is essential for transparency, accountability, and protecting democratic integrity. *—PTI*

Moitra booked for 'behead Shah' remark

RAIPUR, 31 AUG

An FIR has been registered against Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, following her contentious remarks directed at Union Home Minister Amit Shah, officials confirmed on Friday. The complaint, lodged by local resident Gopal Samanto, invokes sections 196 (promoting enmity between groups) and 197 (imputations prejudicial to national integration) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), alleging Moitra's comments were "objectionable, unconstitutional and capable of disturbing social harmony," especially given the Bangladeshi refugee presence in Raipur's Mana Camp since 1971.

During a media interaction in Nadia district, Moitra, speaking in Bengali, had asserted Shah should be held responsible for illegal infiltration from Bangladesh and allegedly stated, "the first thing you should do is cut Amit Shah's head and put it on your table".

The BJP swiftly condemned the statement as a "distasteful and hate remark." Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai called for action from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. *—PTI*

7K CBI cases pending trial; 379 over 20 years

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has disclosed that as of December 2024, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was investigating 7,072 corruption cases pending trial in courts across India. Of these, 379 cases have been pending for over 20 years. The report expresses concern over the lengthy delays, stating that "2,660 cases were pending for more than 10 years at the end of 2024."

The distribution of cases shows 1,506 pending for less than three years, 791 between three and five years, and 2,115 between five and ten years. Additionally, 2,281 cases have been pending for more than a decade but less than 20 years.

Appeals filed by the CBI and accused persons also face significant delays, with 13,100 appeals pending in high courts and the Supreme Court. Of these appeals, 606 have been pending for over 20 years. In 2024, the CVC reports that 644

cases were resolved, with a conviction rate of 69.14 per cent, compared to 71.47 per cent in 2023.

The report further states that 11,384 cases, including non-corruption matters, remain under trial in various courts. The CVC highlights "some delay" in investigations, citing "excessive work," "inadequate manpower," and "delay in obtaining responses to Letters Rogatory" or prosecution sanctions as primary reasons. It emphasises the importance of completing investigations promptly to enhance efficiency and curb lengthy delays. *—PTI*

A woman awaits rescue as heavy rain floods homes in Punjab's Hoshiarpur on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

August rainfall in Northwest highest since 2001: IMD

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Northwest India experienced its wettest August since 2001, with 265 mm of rainfall, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). This marks the 13th highest since 1901 and follows above-normal monsoon months — June saw 111 mm (42 per cent above normal) and July 237.4mm (13 per cent above normal). Cumulatively, the region received 614.2mm from June to August, 27 per cent above the usual 484.9mm.

The heavy rains caused severe flooding, especially in Punjab, where swollen rivers and breached canals inundated vast farmland and displaced thousands. Himalayan states faced cloudbursts and flash floods, leading to landslides and infrastructure damage in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu, and Kashmir. IMD attributed this to active monsoon conditions supported by frequent western disturbances.

Meanwhile, South Peninsular India recorded 250.6mm in August, 31 per cent above normal, the third-highest since 2001. The region received 607.7 mm from June to August, a 9.3 per cent surplus. Looking ahead, IMD forecasts above-normal rainfall for September, with most areas experiencing normal to above-average precipitation. However, some parts of the northeast, east, and extreme south may see below-normal rain. IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra warned, "Heavy rainfall in September may trigger landslides and flash floods in Uttarakhand," emphasising the ongoing risk of flooding. He noted that the delayed monsoon withdrawal — now expected around 17 September — indicates increased interaction with western disturbances, likely to keep September wetter than usual. *—PTI*

The region saw 27% above normal rain of 614.2MM

>>>More on Pages 4 & 5

FOR HELPING 20L GIRLS

Indian NGO 'Educate Girls' wins Ramon Magsaysay Award

MANILA, 31 AUG

Indian non-profit 'Educate Girls' has won the prestigious 2025 Ramon Magsaysay Award, becoming the first Indian organisation to receive Asia's highest honour, often referred to as the region's Nobel Prize.

Founded by Safeena Husain in 2007, Educate Girls works to enrol out-of-school girls in remote Indian villages, aiming to break cultural barriers and end female illiteracy. Beginning in Rajasthan, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, helping more than 20 lakh girls with a retention rate of over 90 per cent.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) praised Educate Girls for "liberating girls from illiteracy and equipping them with skills, courage, and agency to achieve their full potential." The NGO also pioneered the world's first Development Impact Bond in education in 2015 and recently launched 'Pragati', a programme enabling women aged 15–29 to complete their education. Its initial batch of 300 learners has grown to over 31,500.

Founder Safeena Husain termed the award as a 'historic moment for Educate Girls and for the country' **PHOTO: X/@EDUCATE GIRLS**

"This is a historic moment for Educate Girls and for the country," Husain said, calling it global recognition of India's grassroots movement for girls' education. The 2025 awardees also include Maldivian environmentalist Shaahina Ali and Filipino priest Flaviano Antonio Villanueva for their work in marine conservation and supporting victims of extrajudicial killings, respectively.

The awards will be presented on 7 November at Manila's Metropolitan Theatre. Previous Indian recipients include Mother Teresa, Satyajit Ray, Ravish Kumar, Sonam Wangchuk, and Arvind Kejriwal. RMAF chair Edgar O. Chua said this year's winners continue the legacy of "integrity, courage and compassion shaping society." *—PTI*

CITY WOMAN FOUND DEAD IN KOLLUR AFTER TEMPLE VISIT

UDUPI, 31 AUG

46-year-old Bengaluru woman, who went missing after visiting the Sri Mookambika Temple in Kollur, was found dead near the Mavinakaru estuary, police said here on Sunday.

The deceased, Vasudha Chakravarthi, daughter of CR Govindaraju from Thyagarajanagar, had arrived in Kollur on August 28. She had parked her car near a private guest house and visited the temple, reportedly spending time at the Anjaneya sanctum before heading towards the Souparnika River, police added.

She did not return, prompting search efforts.

Police, along with expert diver Ishwar Malpe and the fire brigade, began the search, but operations were suspended on 29 August due to strong river currents.

The search resumed on 30 August with assistance from residents. Her body was eventually recovered about 3km downstream near the Mavinakaru estuary.

The body has been shifted for a post-mortem to determine the cause of death. *—PTI*

Kalaburagi PDO booked for calling CM Sidramullakhan

KALABURAGI, 31 AUG

An FIR has been registered at Nimbarga police station against Praveen Kumar, following a complaint over a WhatsApp status containing the word 'Sidramullakhan' and an edited image of Siddaramaiah wearing a Muslim cap. Village leader Mallikarjuna Dannura reported the matter on 21 August, prompting police action. Aland Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer Manappa Kattimani said, "The FIR lodged against PDO Praveen Kumar and the complaint by villagers has been brought to the notice of Zilla Panchayat CEO Bhanwar Singh Meena for further action." Village leaders and panchayat officials demanded disciplinary measures against the PDO. *—SALAR NEWS*

City to host 2nd Fairtrade Network on 9-10 Sept

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Fairtrade India (Centre for Social Markets), in partnership with the Fairtrade Network of Asia and Pacific Producers (Fairtrade-NAPP), will hold the Second National Fairtrade Conference on 9-10 September in the City. Supported by the European Union's SWITCH-Asia Programme and the European Commission's EC FFPA, the event aims to promote sustainable and ethical trade. Fairtrade-NAPP Chairman Pravakar Meher said, "Building on this momentum, the second edition brings together producers, businesses, policymakers, and consumers to place fairtrade on the national agenda." CEO Abhishek Jani stressed supporting farmers and MSMEs amid global volatility and climate change, stating, "This conference is about mainstreaming fairtrade — making sustainability accessible and impactful." The theme is 'Sustainability, Markets, and Impact', with sessions on agriculture and climate resilience. *—PTI*

Kalaburagi police arrest five in youth murder case

KALABURAGI, 31 AUG

Police from Ashoknagar station have arrested five individuals over the murder of a youth at a cremation ground in Hirapur of the State. The accused are Pavan alias Praveen Mallikarjun Muttagi, 29, Sanjay alias Kariya Hanumant Savarekar, 23, Rahul Neelappa, Adarsh Rudrawadi, 21, all residents of Hirapur. Police confirmed these individuals were "directly involved in the killing." The investigation revealed that Mareppa was murdered over a love-related dispute, using a sword. The arrests were made by a special team led by Deputy Commissioners of Police Kanika Sikriwal and Praveen H Nayak. *—SALAR NEWS*

DKS' one leg is towards BJP, claims MLA Yatnal

KALABURAGI, 31 AUG

Senior politician and Bijapur City MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Sunday alleged that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has "one leg" with the BJP. Yatnal referred to Shivakumar's recent singing of the RSS prayer song in the Assembly as "drama" and accused him of attempting secret talks with the BJP. Yatnal, who was expelled from the BJP for violating party discipline, claimed that a meeting was held in Delhi under BJP state president B Y Vijayendra's leadership to discuss making Shivakumar the chief minister if he could bring along 60-70 Congress MLAs. However, Yatnal said the plan was abandoned after BJP leadership received reports that Shivakumar lacked sufficient support within Congress, with only 10-12 MLAs backing him. "There was a meeting in Delhi about Shivakumar becoming CM and Vijayendra as Deputy CM. Both together would have 'sold' State," Yatnal asserted. Shivakumar declined responding, "I don't want to throw stones on garbage or cow dung." *—PTI*

CM backs Banu, calls Dasara cultural festival

Siddaramaiah reminds BJP that Dasara was celebrated even under Muslim rulers

MYSURU, 31 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has strongly defended the decision to invite International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate this year's Mysuru Dasara, calling the event a "Nada Habba" — a cultural and secular festival that belongs to all communities.

"Dasara is not confined to any one religion. It is celebrated by Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists — by all Kannadigas. Only religious bigots are opposing Banu Mushtaq," the Chief Minister said, addressing reporters at Mysuru Airport.

Citing historical precedent, Siddaramaiah reminded critics that Dasara was celebrated even under Muslim rulers like Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, and by Diwan Mirza Ismail. "Earlier too, poet KS Nissar Ahmed, a Muslim, inaugurated the festivities. There's nothing new here," he added.

The CM emphasised that the Dasara high-power committee had entrusted him with selecting the inaugural guest, and he personally chose Mushtaq. "She has brought global recognition to Kannada with her Booker-winning work 'Hrudaya Hanate' (Heart Lamp). Her literary contributions are solely in Kannada — does that not reflect respect for the language?"

He also dismissed BJP demands that Mushtaq should clarify her reverence for Goddess Chamundeshwari. "An old speech was distorted. Can someone write in Kannada without loving Kannada Tayi?" he asked.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Banu Mushtaq *PHOTO: ANI/X*

- The CM emphasised that the Dasara high-power committee had entrusted him with selecting the inaugural guest, and he personally chose Mushtaq

Critics, including BJP leaders B.Y. Vijayendra and Mysuru MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, had objected to Mushtaq's past remarks on Kannada being deified. Siddaramaiah accused the BJP of manufacturing controversy due to lack of real issues. "They're politicising even this cultural event. Let them first learn history."

On calls to invite Deepa Bhasthi, the translator of Mushtaq's book and co-winner of the Booker, Siddaramaiah clarified: "You don't call two people to inaugurate one event. Both have already been honoured by the state with 10 lakh each."

This year's Mysuru Dasara will commence on 22 September and conclude with Vijayadashami on 2 October. *—Salar News*

CONG TARGETING CHAMUNDI AS PART OF 'TOOLKIT': ASHOKA

MYSURU, 31 AUG

Senior BJP leader and Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka has accused the Congress government of targeting Hindu religious centres as part of a political "toolkit," citing recent remarks about Chamundi Hill and the Chamundeshwari Temple.

After offering prayers at the hilltop temple, Ashoka condemned Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's statement that Chamundi Hill and Goddess Chamundeshwari do not belong exclusively to Hindus.

"If it doesn't belong to Hindus, who does it belong to? Will you dare say the same outside a mosque?" he challenged.

Ashoka alleged a wider pattern of attacks on Hindu faith, citing past controversies involving Sabarimala, Tirupati, and Dharmasthala. He warned that BJP would launch a "Chamundeshwari Devasthana Chalo" protest if the temple is "disrespected," asserting: "Targeting this temple will mark the beginning of Congress's downfall." *—Salar News*

> **The Wadiyar family has contributed greatly to the State. The iconic KRS, Vani Vilas Sagar dam, JC Engineering college, Victoria Hospital and Shivanasamudra power plant are just some of the corner stones they laid for a progressive Karnataka**
>
> —DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM

MLC SAYS SIMHA TARGETTING BANU TO GET BJP'S ATTENTION

MYSURU, 31 AUG

MLC H Vishwanath ridiculed BJP MP Pratap Simha's criticism of Banu Mushtaq's Dasara invite, quipping, "Is this the naked truth or your Booker novel?" He said Simha speaks for attention, despite being sidelined by BJP.

Vishwanath also slammed Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje for suggesting a ban on Chamundi Hill access, calling it undemocratic. "Dasara belongs to all," he asserted.

Meanwhile, royal family member Pramoda Devi Wadiyar stated Chamundi Hill is sacred to Hindus and the Yadu dynasty, adding, "Political statements don't change spiritual heritage."

Tensions continue over the intersection of religion and cultural tradition. *—Salar News*

Siddaramaiah says no NIA probe in Dharmasthala case

MYSURU, 31 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has ruled out a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe into the ongoing Dharmasthala controversy, stating that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been granted complete autonomy to investigate the serious allegations of rape, murder, and secret burials spanning two decades.

"There is no need for an NIA probe. The SIT has been formed to uncover the truth and has full freedom to act. Even Dharmadhikari Veerendra Heggade has welcomed the investigation," Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru.

The case sparked political tensions after the whistleblower, now arrested for perjury, claimed to have buried bodies, many allegedly of sexually assaulted women, near the Netravathi River in Dharmasthala. Following this, the SIT conducted excavations at multiple locations, recovering skeletal remains at two sites.

Despite initially welcoming the SIT probe, BJP and JD(S) have now demanded a central investigation and are holding separate rallies in Dharmasthala. Siddaramaiah hit back, accusing the opposition of politicising the matter. "When in power, did BJP hand any such case to the CBI? Their demand is purely for political gain," he said.

On the timeline for the probe, he declined to commit. "We are not interfering. SIT will investigate and submit the report," he added. *—PTI*

BYE BYE GANESHA

Devotees carry Ganesha idols in a vibrant procession along St John's Road near RBANMS Grounds, en route to Ulsoor Lake for immersion in Bengaluru on Sunday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

BWSSB to launch smart cards for sanitation workers

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) says its upcoming 'Annapoorna Scheme' is a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country aimed at ensuring "healthy and dignified mornings" for sanitation workers.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar will launch the scheme on 1 September by distributing smart cards to workers.

BWSSB chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said the initiative combines technology with compassion, making "Bengaluru the first city to provide direct financial assistance for daily breakfast to sanitation workers."

Under the scheme, more than 700 BWSSB sanitation workers will receive a smart card powered by Axis Bank, with Rs 1,500 credited every month.

The card can be used at food outlets of their choice, allowing workers the dignity of choosing their own healthy breakfast, board said.

"This is our way of saluting the relentless efforts of those who keep our city clean," Manohar added. *—PTI*

Under the scheme, more than 700 BWSSB sanitation workers will receive a smart card powered by Axis Bank, with Rs 1,500 credited every month

ACTIVIST SAYS HE & D'STHALA WHISTLEBLOWER TOOK SKULL TO DELHI

MANGALURU, 31 AUG

In a major twist in the Dharmasthala mass burial case, activist Jayant T has admitted to taking a human skull to Delhi along with complainant whistleblower, who alleged secret burials near the Dharmasthala temple.

Jayant, closely linked to activist Mahesh Shetty Thimmarodi, confirmed that he accompanied the whistle-blower, Girish Mattannavar, and Sujatha Bhat in a rented vehicle to Delhi to present the skull to a religious figure. He said he acted on Mattannavar's instructions and claimed he was unaware of any criminal intent.

Jayant revealed he sheltered whistleblower in his Bengaluru home but kept the skull outside. "It contained plastic and soil. I only took photos on the whistle-blower's phone," he said, admitting it was wrong to carry the skull but insisting he had no criminal role. "If I must go to jail for telling the truth, I'm ready," he told reporters in Belthangady.

> **There is no question of doing politics in the Dharmasthala issue. All of us should stand for 'Dharma' and the truth should win. Some anti-social elements have conspired and are behind this episode of spreading misinformation**
>
> —Nikhil Kumaraswamy, JD(S) leader

While Jayant denied being part of a conspiracy, SIT has searched his home and is investigating his connections and skull's origin.Neighbours have also levelled unverified allegations of drug peddling against him, though no formal action has been taken. The probe continues. *—Salar New*

Khandre seeks ₹100 crore relief from CM amid heavy rains

BENGALURU/BIDAR, 31 AUG

In the wake of heavy rains that wreaked havoc across Bidar district this August, District In-charge Minister Eshwar Khandre has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to sanction an immediate ₹100 crore special relief package.

Khandre, who met the CM on Saturday evening, said torrential rains have caused widespread destruction, damaging thousands of acres of crops including soybean and red gram, washing away bridges, cutting off roads and power supply, and flooding hundreds of homes.

The district administration's preliminary assessment, based on NDRF and SDRF guidelines, estimates total losses at around 500 crore. With food grains ruined and essential infrastructure disrupted, the minister warned that the already backward district faces deeper distress.

He appealed for urgent relief to support affected farmers, labourers, and poor families who have been hit hardest by the disaster.

A formal request for financial aid has been submitted to the state government. *—Salar News*

Mysuru Railway Bank to mark 105 years on 6 Sept

MYSURU, 31 AUG

The Railway Co-operative Bank will celebrate its centenary, or 'Shatha Payana', on 6 September at MMC and RI Platinum Jubilee Auditorium, JK Ground. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar are expected to attend.

President MB Manjegowda told mediapersons that the bank was founded on 1 April 1920 as a co-operative society in a small room at Bengaluru's Railway Audit Office. It was established by LV Gopalan, a Travelling Inspector of Accounts in Mysore State Railway, with 112 members and a paid-up share capital of Rs 2,580.

Today, it has over 10,000 members and deposits exceeding Rs 650 crore, operating through five branches in Mysuru, Bengaluru, Yelahanka, Arasikere, and the Railway Workshop Ashokpuram. The bank offers services including the loans, advances, and deposit schemes, with the loans sanctioned within 30 minutes. It was recognised as the Best Co-operative Bank in Mysuru District in 2007.

The modernisation has been a key focus, with the Head Office achieving A-grade status and core banking introduced in 2009.

Future plans include transforming into a Multi-State Co-operative Bank and opening branches in Hubli, Mangaluru, Mandya, and Davangere. The celebration will also honour founding members and award children of members excelling in SSLC and above. *—Salar News*

HASSLE-FREE TRANSPORT

KSRTC to run 90 spl buses to Kerala for Onam

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

In anticipation of high travel demand during the Tiru Onam festival on 5 September, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has announced the operation of 90 additional special buses to Kerala from 2 to 4 September. These services are in addition to the regular schedule and aim to ensure smooth and hassle-free travel for festival-goers. To encourage group travel and early booking, KSRTC is offering a 5 per cent discount on fares when four or more passengers book together on a single ticket. Additionally, a 10 per cent discount will be available on return tickets if onward & return tickets are booked together. The buses will operate from Mysuru Road Bus Station and Shanthinagar Bus Station (BMTC), covering

major destinations in Kerala, including Kannur, Kozhikode, Ernakulam, Palakkad, Thrissur, Kottayam, & Thiruvananthapuram. All premier-class services will depart exclusively from Shanthinagar. Return services from various parts of Kerala to Bengaluru are scheduled for 7 September.

Advance reservations can be made at KSRTC booking counters located in key cities across neighbouring states including Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Puducherry, & Goa, Maharashtra. *—Salar News*

Wellness Camp held for jawans in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Troops and their families from the Indian Army's Gorkha Amphibians at Banaswadi Military Garrison participated in a Spiritual & Wellness Camp at the Art of Living International Center in the City. Held on 30 August, the day-long event featured guided meditation, Yoga Nidra, and an ashram tour, aiming to enhance mental resilience, stress management, and emotional well-being alongside physical readiness. The programme included an interaction with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Founder of Art of Living, stated in a press release from Ministry of Defence's Directorate of Public Relations. Indian Army continues to support initiatives that integrate physical fitness with spiritual and emotional wellness. *—Salar News*

2 armed terrorists arrested in J&K's Poonch

JAMMU, 31 AUG

Police have arrested two terrorists with weapons in Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Poonch, officials said on Sunday. Tariq Sheikh of Azamabad and Riyaz Ahmad of Chamber village were taken into custody during a raid, they said, adding that two assault rifles and some ammunition were recovered at their disclosure. Police raided the house of Sheikh at Azamabad and arrested him along with his associate, Ahmad. After questioning the duo, the police team raided the rented accommodation of Sheikh at Jallian village and seized the weapons, the officials said. *—PTI*

Congress names 31 candidates for Bodo council polls

GUWAHATI, 31 AUG

The Opposition Congress has announced candidates for 31 of the 40 constituencies in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections, scheduled for 22 September. Key nominees include Ranchana Basumatary, Rananjay Narzary, Kwrwm Mushahry, Sahar Ali, Matilal Basumatary and Rajib Basumatary. The BTC, part of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), is currently ruled by the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), an NDA ally seeking a second term. The Bodoland People's Front (BPF) hopes to return to power, while the BJP is contesting independently, aiming to form its first BTC government. Nominations close on 2 September, with polling on 22 September and counting on 26 September. Over 26.5 lakh voters will cast their ballots across 3,359 polling stations. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

8-day Europe tour: Stalin arrives in Germany

CHENNAI, 31 AUG

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin arrived in Germany on 30 August, starting an eight-day Europe tour aimed at attracting investments and strengthening ties with the global Tamil diaspora, the state government said on Sunday. On 1 September, Stalin will lead a high-powered investment conclave in Düsseldorf, where he will engage with international investors and industrial leaders. The government expects several key investment announcements and MoUs, alongside one-on-one meetings with firms looking to invest in or expand operations in Tamil Nadu. He will also meet Hendrik Wüst, Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia, to enhance cooperation between Germany's and India's most industrialised states. *—PTI*

'PM Modi to host dinner for NDA MPs on 8 Sept'

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host a dinner for National Democratic Alliance (NDA) MPs on 8 September, a day before the Vice-Presidential election on 9 September, according to a senior NDA leader. The leader further added, "While our candidate, CP Radhakrishnan, enjoys the full support of all NDA partners, the dinner will help ensure complete coordination and unity among MPs during the voting." The election will be conducted through the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. To be declared elected, a candidate must secure more than 50 per cent of the valid votes polled. The NDA has fielded Maharashtra Governor and BJP veteran CP Radhakrishnan, who hails from Tamil Nadu, as its nominee in the Vice-Presidential poll. *—ANI*

EC plans new voter cards for all voters in Bihar

Nearly 30,000 people filed pleas for inclusion in voters' list

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Election Commission plans to issue new voter identity cards to all electors of Bihar after the completion of the ongoing special intensive revision of electoral rolls in the state, officials said on Sunday.

They added that a final call on when the new cards will be issued is yet to be taken by the poll authority.

Officials said while the plan is to issue every Bihar voter with a new voter card, a final call on when and how the exercise will be carried out is yet to be taken.

When electors were given enumeration forms, they were asked to submit the filled up document along with their latest photograph. The new photograph will be used to update records and issuing fresh voter cards.

According to the draft electoral roll of Bihar published on August 1, the state has 7.24 crore electors.

The poll authority is yet to take a final call on when the new voter identity cards will be issued to all voters in Bihar *PHOTO: AI*

The final voters list will be published on September 30 and assembly elections in the state are likely to be held in November.

The term of the present assembly ends on November 22 and a new House has to be constituted before that.

According to the EC, 99 per cent of those who had filled up enumeration forms have so far submitted their documents.

Nearly 30,000 people have filed pleas for inclusion in the voters list as their names were missing from the draft rolls.

Separately, Bihar has become the first state where the number of electors per polling stations has been reduced from 1500 to a maximum of 1200 as part of rationalisation exercise to ensure lesser crowding of polling stations on voting day.

Due to rationalisation, the number of polling stations in the state has gone up from 77,000 to 90,000.

The rationalisation exercise will eventually be carried out pan India. *—PTI*

MANN KI BAAT

Modi urges people to take pride in 'swadeshi' goods

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged Indians to take pride in using swadeshi (Made in India) products, emphasising the importance of the "vocal for local" mantra and the path of "aatmanirbhar Bharat" as crucial for achieving a developed India.

In the 125th episode of his Mann Ki Baat broadcast, Modi appealed to people to choose Indian-made goods during the upcoming festive season, including Ganesh Chaturthi, Durga Puja and Diwali. "Say with pride, this is swadeshi," he repeated, calling self-reliance the "only path" towards national progress.

Highlighting India's growing cultural influence worldwide, Modi noted the unveiling of a 51-foot statue of Lord Ram in Mississauga, Canada, and a unique exhibition in Vladivostok, Russia, where children showcased Ramayana-themed paintings.

Expressing deep concern over the widespread monsoon devastation, Modi praised the relentless efforts of national and state emergency forces, who used modern technology such as drones, thermal cameras, sniffer dogs and life detectors during rescue operations.

> **During this monsoon season, natural disasters are testing the country. In the last few weeks, we have witnessed massive havoc caused by floods and landslides. Homes torn apart, fields submerged, and entire families destroyed.**
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Modi also celebrated Jammu and Kashmir's achievements, including Pulwama's first day-night cricket match and the Khelo India Water Sports Festival at Dal Lake in Srinagar. *—PTI*

TV journalist shot during a festival in Manipur

IMPHAL/ GUWAHATI, 31 AUG

A TV journalist was shot in Manipur's Senapati district, where he went to cover a flower festival, police said on Sunday.

Deep Saikia, a journalist of the Nagaland-based Hornbill TV, received gunshot wounds on his armpits and legs, they said.

The incident happened on Saturday evening in Laii village of the Naga-dominated district, where Saikia was covering the Zinnia flower festival, they added.

The gunman was caught along with an air gun by the locals and handed over to the police, officials said.

Police said they were investigating the motive behind the attack on the journalist.

Five journalists were returning from an event when Saika was shot in the leg. *—PTI*

'SPINELESS GOVT'

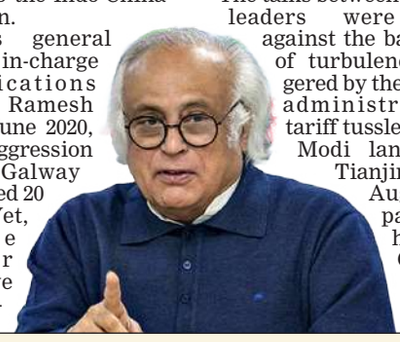
Is 'new normal' defined by Chinese bullying: Congress

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping, the Congress on Sunday questioned the Centre on whether the "new normal" is to be defined by Chinese bullying and "government's spinelessness".

The Congress also asked whether the Modi government's push on reconciliation with China is de facto legitimising its territorial aggression.

During his meeting with Xi, Modi said India is committed to taking forward its ties with China based on mutual trust, respect and sensitivity and that the welfare of 2.8 billion people is linked to the Indo-China cooperation.



Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "In June 2020, Chinese aggression in the Galway Valley killed 20 jawans. Yet, Prime Minister Modi gave an (infamous) clean chit to China."

The Army Chief has demanded a full restoration of the status quo on the border with China in Ladakh.

On July 4, 2025, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen Rahul Singh spoke forcefully and candidly on China's 'jugalbandi' with Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, Ramesh said.

China has announced a gigantic hydel project on the Yarlung Tsangpo that has very grave implications for our Northeast, he said, adding the "Modi government has not spoken a word on this issue". Uncontrolled 'dumping' of Chinese imports continue to devastate MSMEs in the country.

The talks between the two leaders were held against the backdrop of turbulence triggered by the Trump administration's tariff tussle.

Modi landed in Tianjin on 30 August as part of his China trip. *—PTI*

AKHILESH YADAV SLAMS BJP OVER RELIANCE ON CHINA

LUCKNOW, 31 AUG

Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday took a swipe at the BJP while claiming that India's "increased dependence" on Chinese goods would negatively impact domestic industries, increase unemployment and weaken the country's ability to challenge Beijing.

He asked BJP leaders to clarify whether the country's land area has remained the same since the party came to power, or has it shrunk "due to Chinese encroachments".

In a post on X, Yadav sought to expose the "alarming truth" behind the BJP's slogans of self-reliance, swadeshi and boycott Chinese products.

He claimed that China will flood the Indian markets with its goods, leading to a "rising dependence" that would force the government to ignore China's actions.

Taking a swipe at the government, Yadav asked BJP leaders to clarify whether the country's land area has remained the same since the party came to power. *—PTI*

'Voter Adhikar Yatra' to end on Monday

PATNA, 31 AUG

- These leaders travelled together in an open jeep as they displayed unity and took the message of alleged "vote chori" to the state's 25 districts. The yatra was launched in Sasaram.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and other Mahagathbandhan leaders will hold a foot march here on 1 September, marking the culmination of their Voter Adhikar Yatra that covered 1300 km through over 110 assembly constituencies in a prelude to a high-octane assembly polls campaign in the state.

These leaders travelled together in an open jeep as they displayed unity and took the message of alleged "vote chori" to the state's 25 districts.

"Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhor" slogans reverberated as they addressed gatherings daily during the 16-day yatra that began on 17 August in Sasaram.

The Yatra also witnessed a row over a video showing a person using a Hindi expletive against Modi in Darbhanga. BJP and Congress leaders and workers clashed in Patna during a protest march against the incident.

Gandhi said that his Voter Adhikar Yatra' was a "revolution" that would spread out to the entire country.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Marri Shashidhar Reddy accused Gandhi of attempting to mislead voters through the yatra, calling it a "calculated attempt" to create "distrust in democratic processes."

The Bihar Chief Electoral Officer also strongly reacted to allegations of duplication of voters in SIR, terming the claims "speculative, premature, and contrary to the legal framework governing electoral roll management". *—PTI*

Defence secretary RK Singh said the government is likely to ink a fresh contract with HAL for procuring an additional batch of 97 Tejas jets *PHOTO: X/HAL*

HAL set to deliver 2 Tejas jets in Sept: Defence secretary

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Two Tejas Mark-1A fighter jets are likely to be delivered next month by the state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), Defence Secretary RK Singh has said.

Singh said on Saturday that the government is likely to ink a fresh contract with HAL for procuring an additional batch of 97 Tejas jets after the delivery of the two aircraft.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) had flagged concerns over delays in the delivery of the Tejas Mark 1A jets under a previous contract.

"Hopefully, the first two of those will be delivered with weapons integration by the end of September," Singh said at the NDTV Defence Summit.

The defence secretary said about 38 Tejas jets are already in service and another 80-odd are being manufactured.

Last week, the government approved an additional batch of 97 Tejas fighters at a cost of around Rs 67,000 crore.

"I have made it clear to HAL that we will sign this contract only after HAL delivers two Tejas featuring a complete package," Singh said on the additional procurement.

He said HAL "will have an order book for four to five years".

The single-engine Mk-1A will be a replacement for the IAF's MiG-21 fighters. *—PTI*

India to seal 2 deals on submarines

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

India is likely to seal two mega submarine deals worth over Rs one lakh crore by the middle of 2026 to crank up its undersea warfare capabilities against the backdrop of China's increasing naval prowess.

The first project is for the procurement of three Scorpene submarines, which will be jointly constructed by state-run Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) and French defence major Naval Group.

Though the defence ministry cleared the nearly Rs 36,000 crore deal over two years back, there were delays in negotiations to firm up various technical and commercial aspects of the project.

The second project is for the acquisition of six diesel-electric stealth submarines at a cost of around Rs 65,000 crore. The procurement was cleared by the ministry in 2021.

Leading German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) has partnered with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd for the project.Under the Indian Navy's Project 75, MDL and Naval Group have already constructed six Scorpene submarines. Boats will be delivered six years after signing of the contract. *—PTI*

MARATHA QUOTA STIR: DAY 3

Jarange goes without water; BJP pitches for EWS

Maratha quota agitation leader Manoj Jarange during the third day of his hunger strike in Mumbai on sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

MUMBAI, 31 AUG

Manoj Jarange's stir at Mumbai's Azad Maidan for Maratha quota entered the third day on Sunday with the activist hardening his stand by maintaining his demand was constitutionally valid, even as some Maharashtra ministers from the BJP said the community must avail the existing EWS quota.

He has been demanding 10 per cent quota for Marathas and wants them to be recognised as Kunbis -- an agrarian caste included in the Other Backward Classes category -- which will make them eligible for reservation in government jobs and education.

Asserting that he will not leave Mumbai till his demands are met, Jarange said, "The government has records of 58 lakh Marathas as Kunbis."

Jarange said, "From tomorrow, I will stop taking water as the government is not accepting the demands. But I am not going back till the quota demand is met. We will get Marathas reservation under the OBC category no matter what."

Meanwhile, Maharashtra BJP Ministers Chandrakant Patil and Nitesh Rane, belonging to the Maratha community, have said the community should benefit from the existing EWS quota rather than being categorised as OBCs.

Speaking to reporters in Solapur district on Sunday, Chandrakant Patil said Marathas never faced untouchability and were not backward by caste, but shrinking landholdings over the pas years pushed them into financial distress.

Both Patil and Rane said that NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar was funding of the protest launched by Jarange. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

ED seizes Porsche, BMW in Odisha bank fraud raids

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized 10 luxury cars, including a Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Mini Cooper, and three superbikes, during raids on Odisha-based businessman Shakti Ranjan Dash and his companies Anmol Mines Pvt. Ltd. (AMPL) and Anmol Resources Pvt. Ltd. (ARPL). The searches are linked to a Rs 1,396 crore bank loan fraud involving the Indian Technomac Company Ltd (ITCOL) based in Himachal Pradesh. The ED alleges ITCOL secured loans between 2009 and 2013 using forged reports and fake sales to shell firms, diverting Rs 59.80 crore to AMPL. Jewellery worth Rs 1.12 crore, Rs 13 lakh in cash, and two lockers were also seized during the raid operation.—*PTI*

Wild elephant falls into well in Kerala hamlet

KOCHI, 31 AUG

A wild elephant strayed into a human settlement and fell into a well near Kothamangalam in Kerala's Ernakulam district on Sunday. The tusker was found standing in muddy water inside the uncovered well on the property of Varghese, a resident of Kottappadi. Forest officials rushed to the spot after being alerted by locals and began a rescue operation to pull the animal out. Meanwhile, villagers staged a protest demanding a lasting solution to frequent human-elephant conflicts in the region. Residents urged the authorities not to release the elephant nearby, fearing it would return and create havoc. They called for its relocation to a distant wildlife sanctuary. Such incidents had occurred in the area before. —*PTI*

YouTuber assaulted in Kerala, police launches manhunt

IDUKKI, 31 AUG

Noted YouTuber Shajan Skaria, the owner of the popular channel Marunadan Malayali, was allegedly attacked by a group of unidentified assailants in Thodupuzha, Kerala, on Saturday evening, police said on Sunday. According to the first information report, the suspects intercepted Skaria's vehicle, dragged him out, assaulted him and allegedly attempted to murder him. The journalist-turned-YouTuber sustained minor injuries and was admitted to a nearby hospital where he was being treated. The Thodupuzha police have registered a case and launched a manhunt to trace the accused.—*PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

'Pavitra Rishta' actor Priya Marathe dies at 38

MUMBAI, 31 AUG

Television actress Priya Marathe, renowned for her role as Varsha Satish in the hit show Pavitra Rishta, passed away in Mumbai on 31 August, 2025 after battling cancer for two years. She was 38, and breathed her last at her Mira Road residence around 4.00am, according to reports. Born on 23 April, 1987 in Mumbai, Marathe began her acting career with the Marathi serial Ya Sukhanoya and went on to feature in several popular shows, including Saath Nibhaana Saathiya, Bade Acche Lagte Hain, and Uttaran. Her final Instagram post on 11 August, 2024 shared memories from Jaipur's Amer Fort with her husband Shantanu Moghe, whom she married in 2012.—*PTI*

No tax on vehicle not used in public: SC

SC delivered its verdict on an appeal challenging imposition of motor tax on a firm

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Motor vehicle tax is compensatory in nature and if a vehicle is not used or not kept for use in a 'public place', then its owner should not be burdened with motor vehicle tax for such period, the Supreme Court has said.

The court delivered its verdict on an appeal challenging a December 2024 judgement of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

Referring to section 3 of The Andhra Pradesh Motor Vehicle Taxation Act, 1963, the bench said the legislature has consciously used the expression 'public place' in this provision.

Section 3 is the charging provision, which authorises the state government to impose tax on motor vehicles.

The top court said when admittedly 36 motor vehicles of the appellant firm were confined for use within the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) premises which is a closed area, then question of the vehicles being used or kept for being used in a 'public place' does not arise. Therefore, these vehicles were not liable to be taxed for the period.

Since 36 vehicles were kept for use within the RINL premises, then question of their being used in public place didnt arise, SC said **PHOTO: PTI**

The firm was awarded a contract in November 2020 for handling and storage of iron and steel materials at central dispatch yard within Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh.

The issue arose after the firm requested the Andhra Pradesh authority for exemption from payment of motor vehicle tax for the period its vehicles were confined and used within the central dispatch yard premises.

Later, the matter reached the high court, which held that the firm was plying its vehicles within the central dispatch yard which is not a 'public place'.

The single judge also directed the state authorities to refund an amount of Rs 22,71,700 to the company.

Thereafter, the authorities challenged the order before a division bench which set aside the single judge's order. —*PTI*

SC to hear on sale of 20% ethanol blended petrol

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Supreme Court (SC) will hear on Monday a plea challenging the nationwide rollout of 20 percent Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP-20), alleging that motorists were forced to use fuel not designed for their vehicles.

The plea, filed by advocate Akshay Malhotra, has sought a direction to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to ensure availability of ethanol-free petrol at all fuel stations.

It has also sought a direction to the authorities to mandatorily label ethanol content on all petrol pumps and dispensing units, making it clearly visible to consumers, and also to ensure that consumers were informed about ethanol compatibility of their vehicles at the time of fuel dispensing.

The plea said the authorities be directed to conduct a "nationwide impact study on mechanical degradation and efficiency loss due to use of ethanol blended fuel in non-compliant vehicles. It highlighted damage to engines, dropping of mileage among other consequences. —*PTI*

90 ON BOARD

Delhi-Indore AI plane returns over engine 'fire'

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

An Indore-bound Air India plane made an emergency landing in the national capital on Sunday after being airborne for over 30 minutes as the pilot received a "fire indication" in the right engine of the aircraft.

The flight made an emergency landing at around 6:15 am and there were more than 90 people on board.

The aircraft, which operated the flight AI2913, has been grounded for inspection.

Following standard procedure, the cockpit crew elected to shut down the engine and returned to Delhi where the flight landed safely, Air India said in a statement

The flight, operated with an A320 neo aircraft, was airborne for more than 30 minutes before landing back in Delhi, according to information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com

According to Air India, passengers were being transferred to an alternative aircraft, which would operate the flight to Indore shortly.

Air safety regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation has been duly informed about the incident, the airline said.

In recent times, there have been several instances of Air India planes facing technical issues. —*PTI*

Cloudburst in Chennai; Flights diverted

CHENNAI, 31 AUG

Chennai received intense overnight rain and there was a cloud burst over the city's Manali area.

Some flights scheduled to arrive at the Chennai airport were diverted to Bengaluru. However, after the weather was clear in Chennai, the passengers were flown back to the city from Bengaluru by different flights, airport authorities said.

Manali recorded 106.2 mm rainfall during 10-11 pm and 126.6 mm rainfall during 11 pm - 12 midnight on 30 August.

Moderate rain was forecast at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal area during the next 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Army personnel rescued a woman and her 15-day-old child stranded for four days on the first floor of a partially submerged building in the Dhangai village of Punjab's Gurdaspur district.

The baby and the mother, who had undergone a cesarian procedure just a fortnight ago.

The personnel helped them reunited with their family.

Commuters trying to manouever their vehicles through a flooded street in Chennai after overnight rains on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Punjab witnessed massive floods, caused by the swollen Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers due to heavy rain in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Villages in Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Kapurthala, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar districts were worst affected.

Moreover, a motorable bridge on the Jyotirmath-Malari highway in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district got washed away due to heavy rains, severing connectivity to over a dozen villages in the Niti Valley. The Badrinath National Highway and Kund-Chamoli National Highway were blocked. —*PTI*

J&K at risk of floods triggered by glacial lake outburst

KISHTWAR, 31 AUG

A comprehensive risk assessment warns that glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) pose a serious threat to Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, endangering lives, infrastructure, and ecosystems. The GLOF Management Plan for 2024-25 highlights tehsils like Padder, Machail, Dachhan, Marwah, and Warwan as highly vulnerable due to their proximity to glacial lakes, including Mundiksar and Hangu, classified as high-risk.

The report cites recent events, such as the cloudburst-triggered flash flood in Chishoti village, which killed 65 and injured over 115. infrastructure, hydroelectric projects, and the environment face significant risks. The presence of glacial lakes at varying elevations heightens the risk of outburst floods. —*PTI*

3 die after inhaling toxic gas in Uttar Pradesh sewer tank

KANPUR, 31 AUG

Three men died and another was critically injured after inhaling toxic fumes inside a newly constructed sewer tank in Akbarpur, Kanpur Dehat district.

Superintendent of Police Arvind Mishra confirmed the deaths occurred on Saturday in the 10-foot-deep tank due to poisonous fumes.

Labourer Mubeen, 26, from Bigahi village, initially

entered the tank to remove shuttering material and suffocated.

House owner Surendra Gupta, 22, and labourer Sarvesh Kushwaha, 32, entered to rescue him but were overcome by fumes. Israr, 22, Mubeen's brother, also jumped in to save them but suffered the same fate.

Villagers managed to pull all four out; Mubeen, Sarvesh, and Surendra were declared dead at hospital, while Israr remains critically ill. Locals claimed the victims entered without safety equipment. SHO Satish Singh said no FIR has been filed yet. —*PTI*

Govt links green credits for tree plantation to survival

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Indian government has revised its Green Credit Programme, shifting from awarding credits immediately after planting to a five-year, ecological improvement model.

Previously, "green credits... at the rate of one green credit per tree grown... subject to a minimum density of 1,100 trees per hectare," were granted upon certification.

Now, credits will only be awarded after five years of land restoration and achieving at least 40 per cent canopy cover, with "one credit for each new tree that has survived beyond five years".

The 2024 notification allowed immediate credits, but the 2025 update mandates calculation of credits based on the vegetation status, rise in canopy density and surviving trees. —*PTI*

Freight corridors record 47% rise in train trips

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Eastern and Western freight corridors saw a 47 per cent increase in train trips, rising from 88,225 in 2023-24 to 130,116 in 2024-25, officials said.

However, about 34 per cent of trips in 2024-25 were vacant, mainly for coal and cement wagons returning empty, as they cannot carry other products.

Containerised goods made up 24 per cent, coal 19 per cent, and miscellaneous items 11 per cent, with cement, steel, foodgrains, fertiliser, and POL comprising 1-4 per cent.

The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL) credited initiatives like new freight terminals and sidings. Out of 2,843 km, 2,741km are operational; the remaining 102km from Vaitrana to JNPT is to be commissioned by December 2025.

Over 350 trains now operated daily, and once the Western corridor becomes fully operational, freight movement is expected to surge further in the two freight corridors. —*PTI*

Tripura school opens space education library

KUMARGHAT, 31 AUG

A space education library has been established at East Raitwisa Darlong Para High School in Tripura's remote Unakoti district, aiming to inspire future scientists.

The library features scaled models of satellites like SLV Mark-II, PSLV, GSLV, and missions such as Chandrayaan, Mars Mission, and Solar Mission, alongside pre-recorded space science lectures.

Sudip Bhowmik, the Block Development Officer, said, "Our main objective is to create facilities so students in remote tribal areas can visualise India's progress—from rockets on bicycles to human missions." Over 100 books and magazines on astronomy and Indian space scientists are available.

The library was funded under the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj's 'Nanaji Deshmukh Sarbottam Panchayat Satat Vikash Puraskar'. A solar-powered smart classroom has also been developed, supporting a holistic approach to boost scientific temperament and education quality and to increase the number of student from 67 to 201. —*PTI*

UP woman kills hubby for preferring first wife

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 31 AUG

Police here have arrested a woman for allegedly strangling her husband to death in his sleep for neglecting her over his first wife, officials said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on 29 August 29 and the accused, 30-year-old Kavita was arrested by the police on 30 August.

"Sanjay Kumar, 40, was killed by his second wife, Kavita," said station house officer, Dinesh Chand Bhagel. The police were alerted about the crime by the victim's father, Bhopal Singh, based on which an FIR was filed.

During interrogation, Kavita confessed before the police that she had strangled Sanjay to death while he had been sleeping. She also said that Sanjay was "neglecting" her over his first wife.

- Sanjay Kumar, 40, was killed by his second wife, Kavita. The police were alerted about the crime by the Bhopal Singh, the father of the victim.

Sanjay and Kavita got married in 2000. His first wife lives in his native village of Tanda Majra. Further investigations are underway. —*PTI*

IN MONEY LAUNDERING

ED seizes Rs 394 cr in Bibekot scam

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Fresh assets worth Rs 394.42 crore have been attached in connection with an alleged Ponzi scam named 'Bikebot' in Uttar Pradesh, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Sunday.

The properties are held in the name of Kamakhya Educational and Social Welfare Trust, Kamakhya Educational Society, Guru Nanak Charitable Trust, Alpine Technical Education Society, AP Goyal Charitable Trust and an individual named Meena Anand.

The present attachment covers immovable properties and released mortgaged land worth Rs 20.49 crore (valued at Rs 389.30 crore) as well as fixed deposits worth Rs 5.12 crore.

ED has filed four chargesheets against 27 entities in the case **PHOTO: X**

The money laundering case stems from multiple FIRs filed by the Uttar Pradesh Police on the basis of complaints made by certain investors against the 'Bikebot' fraud allegedly committed by Garvit Innovative Promoters Ltd. (GIPL), its promoter Sanjay Bhati and others.

GIPL, Bhati along with others had floated a "highly lucrative" investment plan in the guise of a 'Bike Taxi' named 'Bikebot'.

Aa customer could invest in 1, 3, 5 or 7 bikes which would be maintained and operated by the company and the investor would be paid monthly rent, EMI and bonus (in case of investment in multiple bikes) and further incentives on adding additional investors in a binary/Multi-Level Marketing structure. The company also allotted franchisees in various cities.

The funds mobilised were "diverted" to various related companies. These diverted funds were utilised to purchase immovable properties in Meerut and to get released previously mortgaged properties from banks. The probe agency had conducted searches in 2020 and 2023 and filed four chargesheets against 27 accused entities. —*PTI*

ONAM JOY

Thiruvananthapuram Mayor Arya Rajendran during Onam festival celebrations, in Thiruvananthapuram, on Sunday. Kerala's annual harvest festival is associated with the legend of Asura King Mahabali, who once ruled Kerala, returning each year to visit his people ***PHOTO: PTI***

Construction, climate crisis driving landslide surge

Excavators are being used to clear debris from the blocked Badrinath National Highway after landslides in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

The increasing frequency and intensity of landslides across India is no longer just a consequence of natural topography, but a combination of changing rainfall patterns, climate change, deforestation, and constructions in ecologically sensitive areas, a senior official of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) said on Sunday.

Noting that though pollution is not a direct trigger for landslides, he said that air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are, however, key contributors to climate change, altering rainfall patterns across many parts of the world, including India, significantly increasing the risk of landslides in geologically sensitive areas such as Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

"The combined factors, namely, the geological make-up, climatic conditions, and increasing anthropogenic pressure together make our hilly regions particularly vulnerable to landslides," GSI Director General Asit Saha told PTI at the scientific agency's headquarters here in Kolkata.

"While India has long been vulnerable to landslides, particularly in the Himalayas and Western Ghats, what we are witnessing in recent times is an increasing frequency and intensity of landslides, driven by both natural and anthropogenic factors, often acting in combination. Similarly, the formation and subsequent breach of glacial lakes, often formed due to landslides damming river valleys in the upper reaches of the Himalayas, have emerged as serious hazards causing downstream flooding and slope instability.

Elaborating on the possible reasons behind the rise in the incidents of landslides in the hills and mountains of India, the geoscientist cited several causes.

"These areas naturally have steep slopes, inherently more susceptible to gravitational movement of rock, debris, or soil. Even minor disturbances, whether natural or human-induced, can destabilise such slopes.

"Secondly, many of these regions are tectonically active zones. The geological formations here are often young, fractured, and highly weathered, making them structurally weaker and more prone to failure during intense rainfall or seismic activity," Saha said.

Besides, pointing to monsoonal rain playing a significant role in the increase in landslide incidents, he also highlighted human activities such as construction on unstable slopes, which disrupt natural drainage systems and lead to destabilisation of the terrain.

"And then there is the role of human activity: developmental activity, deforestation, road construction, and expansion of existing infrastructure, especially on unstable or unengineered slopes, which many a time disrupt natural drainage systems and further destabilise the terrain," the geologist said.

Further, he pointed to "deforestation and land degradation" as long-standing concerns behind incidents of landslides.

"Our investigations and landslide susceptibility mapping studies have consistently shown that removal of vegetation cover significantly reduces slope stability," he said.

The GSI official also said that though the agency has not undertaken specific studies linking pollution directly to landslides, it believes that pollution, "as part of the larger climate change dynamic, is a contributing factor to environmental changes that heighten the risk of such disasters".

Geologists, through their National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping (NLSM) programme, have identified several areas along the entire Himalayan belt, from Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh to Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh as the most susceptible to landslides, he said.

They have also identified areas in peninsular India, like the Western Ghats, particularly in Kerala, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, as well as the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu and the Konkan coast, as high-risk areas, Saha added.

"Together, these landslide-prone regions span approximately 0.43 million sq km and including permafrost zones, the total landslide-prone area expands to 0.49 million sq km," he elaborated.

Till August this year, India has experienced multiple deadly landslides, particularly in the Himalayan states, during the ongoing monsoon season.

Major incidents have occurred in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh, often triggered by heavy rain, cloudbursts, and flash floods.

This month itself, India witnessed a massive landslide near the Vaishno Devi shrine, killing at least 30 people. The disaster followed record-breaking rainfall that also caused widespread flooding. In the earlier weeks of August, cloudbursts and heavy rain in the Ramban and Reasi districts led to flash floods and landslides, resulting in multiple deaths and blocking the Jammu-Srinagar national highway for days.

In Uttarakhand, a cloudburst caused a major mudslide, destroying parts of Dharali in Uttarkashi district, leaving at least four people dead and dozens missing. In late June, Himachal Pradesh recorded numerous landslides, cloudbursts, and flash floods in the districts of Mandi, Kullu, and Chamba. —PTI

SALAR ساہر

Arunachal tribal languages are facing extinction

In a wooden house on the misty slopes of Taksing village in Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, 72-year-old Chakiap Bai leans forward and hums a lullaby in Nah, a language spoken by barely a few hundred people.

His granddaughter listens with curiosity, but when asked to repeat the lines, she replies in Hindi.

Tribal elders in remote villages of the northeastern state fear their ancestral songs and stories may vanish forever as children increasingly abandon their mother tongues.

"That is my biggest fear. Our children understand Na, but they do not speak it. If they stop speaking, the songs of our ancestors will fall silent," he said.

Home to more than 40 languages and over 100 dialects, the state is one of India's richest linguistic landscapes. Yet many of its tongues are teetering on the brink of extinction.

The Nah people, with a population of little over a thousand as per the 2011 Census, live in Upper Subansiri district. Their language, Na, belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family and is closely related to Tagin. Efforts to preserve it include language competitions and pictorial glossaries, but speakers like Bai remain anxious.

In West Kameng's Singchung area, 65-year-old Bugun woman Sarita Phinya still recalls the wedding chants she learned as a child.

"We used to sing them for hours during ceremonies. Now, my grandchildren only know Bollywood songs. Sometimes they laugh when I sing in Bugun," she laments.

Her neighbour, 52-year-old Esnam Phiang, has mobilised local youth with mobile phones to record folk songs, lullabies and folktales from elders.

"We realised that if we don't record them now, we may never hear them again. Our phones have become our libraries," he said.

"When my father passed away, he took with him stories in Meyor that I had never learned," said 52-year-old farmer Dising Meyor of Kaho village in Anjaw district.

"It felt like a whole book was burned," he added.

Experts underline that such concerns are real.

"Languages like Meyor, Bugun and Nah have fewer than 2,000 speakers between them," said professor Tana Sworen, senior faculty in history at Rajiv Gandhi University, who is also a member of UGC and Sahitya Akademi.

"Without conscious effort from the younger generation, they could vanish in a few decades. Our learning process does not provide education in mother tongues. Every week, a child is losing approximately 10 words because they are not using their own language at home for communication," he warned.

Sworen has called for the establishment of a State Council for Vernacular Language Research and Training, modelled on the State Council for Education Research and Training.

"Under the National Education Policy, the government has given stress to imparting mother tongues in the states. The state government can pass legislation in this regard for conservation and propagation of our dying languages," he said, adding that "tribal vernacular is facing a threat and the time has come to ponder seriously in this direction".

Communities across the state are experimenting with revival initiatives.

In Nafra, parents are reviving bedtime storytelling in Sartang. In Kibithoo, village schools have introduced 'language days' where children must greet and converse in Meyor.

Deputy Director of Research Bulton Dutta said UNESCO has listed 34 of the state's languages in varying categories of endangerment.

"Linguistic expert from London, Robert Blench, who was in the state recently, said that the UNESCO report is based on statistics but not on a ground survey for which the number of endangered languages in the state may vary," he noted.

Dutta added that there are 73 spoken languages in Arunachal as per the Research Department's records.

"We have already conducted a linguistic survey in the state last year and forwarded it to the government with recommendations for taking necessary actions in this regard," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, who holds the Finance, Planning and Investment portfolios, said the state government is committed to language preservation.

"Our government is committed to the preservation and propagation of tribal languages and has already provided budgetary allocation in this regard," he said.

Mein said that third languages have been introduced in schools across districts to foster love for mother tongues.

"We are also putting efforts into documenting the culture and oral traditions of the tribes rigorously. We will document the oral traditions of the state tribes with due consultations with research and other departments and will soon constitute a committee with a long-term vision for preservation and propagation of dying languages in the state," he said.

Despite official support, challenges remain. With English and Hindi dominating classrooms and digital media reshaping entertainment even in remote villages, younger generations often shy away from their ancestral tongues.

For elders like Bai, Phinya and Meyor, the struggle is not just linguistic but existential. —PTI

Meyor, Bugun and Nah have fewer than 2,000 speakers between them ***PHOTO: FB/PEMA KHANDU***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Happily never after: Fake weddings are the latest party craze

The ticketed events, priced between Rs 1,500 and above Rs 10,000, have partygoers unleashing their inner baraatis in not-wedding season ***PHOTO: AI***

Decor? Tick. Mehndi, music and mad dancing? Of course. Lavish buffet? That too. Baraatis? Yes. Bride and groom? Err... no. Not necessary at all.

Welcome to the new world of partying in urban India.

With the band, baaja, baraat in place, these big fat Indian 'weddings' are as fun as they can be – sans family fuss and an actual couple entering into matrimony. The faux wedding theme has become all the craze with the urban young and maybe not so young too grooving their way through commitment-free bashes.

"It's about letting guests dress up, dance, eat, and play the part -- purely for the joy of it," said Nishant Kumar, founder of Tahia, a rooftop restaurant in Noida, who recently hosted a sold-out fake wedding event.

"It's a novel idea born out of nostalgia, drama, and a love for Indian celebrations. Weddings are one of the most vibrant expressions of culture, food, music, and emotion — but they're also chaotic and personal. We thought: what if we gave people all the fun, drama, and indulgence of a big fat Indian wedding -- minus the family politics."

The idea worked

The ticketed events, priced between Rs 1,500 and above Rs 10,000, have partygoers unleashing their inner baraatis in not-wedding season.

The quirky invites and irresistible event descriptions are hard to ignore. Think specialty cocktails with names like the cheeky "Shaadi Waali LIIT".

Next, girls are getting mehndi done and slipping into sequin lehengas, while boys turn up in embroidered kurtas. Strangers become friends and hit the dance floor.

"There is none of the usual stress about what to wear -- or not wear -- that you'd have at a real wedding with nosy relatives around. We are just there with our friends, dancing to the beats of the dhol, enjoying the food and drinks without a care in the world," said Natasha Ghai, a college student in her 20s.

"It felt liberating, and the wedding vibe was absolutely on point," Gha added enthusiastically about one such fake wedding theme party she attended in Gurgaon recently.

Apoorva Gupta, a Delhi-based media professional in her 30s who typically avoids social events, was surprisingly happy to accompany her friend and her friend's mother to a relaxed, no-strings-attached wedding in south Delhi.

What drew her in wasn't the idea of a wedding itself, but the absence of everything that usually makes such events exhausting.

"I never thought I'll enjoy a so-called wedding event so much. I danced on wedding songs all night as if no one was watching -- and to be honest no one was. Everyone was too busy having their own fun. There was no pressure of small talk with distant relatives or pose for photos with bride and groom. Honestly, I wouldn't mind attending more weddings if they were like this," she laughed.

With numerous fake weddings held across Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, and Goa last month, and many more lined up for this month, the future of this trend looks just as sparkly as the venues themselves.

Kumar is ready with a Plan B

"Once this wave passes, we're ready with the next -- be it shaadi afterparties, or themed nights around break-ups, rishtas, or Bollywood clichés. The core stays the same: food, fun, and fantasy. The format just keeps evolving," he explained.

According to Sid Mathur, founder of the food consulting firm Secret Ingredient, the events also offer a prime moment for experiential dining with consumers increasingly looking for more than just good food -- they want stories, surprise, and something a little off-centre.

"These immersive ideas, such as a faux wedding setup, create excitement and give people a reason to step out, especially in a saturated market. While they're not meant to replace traditional formats, they add that burst of energy and fun that can reinvigorate a brand, especially when executed well and timed right," he explained.

And there's no shortage of out-of-the-box trends when it comes to immersive experiences.

The Piano Man, a chain of jazz clubs across Delhi-NCR that combines great music and food, has come up with the 'Gourmet Cinema' concept, where classic films are screened alongside menus inspired by the movie's setting, mood, and storyline.

It recently screened 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara' along with a Spanish menu inspired by the film to reflect its setting. 'Ratatouille' was accompanied by dishes actually made in the hit animation. And 'The Grand Budapest Hotel' was paired with a dining experience that captured the whimsical elegance of the film.

The response, said Arjun Sagar Gupta, founder of The Piano Man, is "absolutely fantastic".

"Every show has been sold out and it is currently scheduled to run for an extended period, with fortnightly shows at both our Eldeco Centre and Gurugram venues. In addition to our core focus, which is showcasing music and artists from around the world, we have spent the last 10 years curating a variety of experiences across performance arts, education, fine art and more," he added.

That said, Mathur, who is also the founder of KHOYA Mithai, pointed out that these playful dining concepts aren't the bread and butter of the trade but are certainly the delightful, unexpected jam that makes people talk.

"They're not designed to be the backbone of your business, but they add flavour, help generate virality, and serve as powerful marketing moments. They're fantastic tools to create buzz and attract attention, especially for newer or rebranding establishments," he concluded. —PTI

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Aus signs deportation deal with Nauru

CANBERRA, 30 AUG

Australia has signed a deal with Nauru to deport former immigration detainees without valid visas to the island nation. Under the agreement, Australia will pay AUD 408 million upfront, followed by AUD 70 million annually for resettlement. The move, targeting over 200 released detainees post a 2023 High Court ruling against indefinite detention, has sparked backlash. Critics warn it could lead to mass deportations without notice. The UN has previously cited Nauru for "systematic violations" of anti-torture conventions. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said the deal ensures "proper treatment and long-term residence" in Nauru. Refugee advocate Jana Favero called it "discriminatory, disgraceful and dangerous", accusing the Albanese government of continuing attacks on migrants and refugees.—*PTI*

Australians protest against Indian migrants

Aus govt condemns campaigns, calls it Far-Right activism

CANBERRA/MUMBAI, 31 AUG

Thousands of Australians took to the streets on Sunday in anti-immigration rallies under the banner "March for Australia", with promotional materials specifically targeting Indian migrants. Flyers for the demonstrations highlighted Indian-born residents, now over 3 per cent of Australia's population, blaming them for cultural change and housing strain.

The rallies, held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, and Hobart, warned of cultural "replacement", claiming "More Indians in 5 years than Greeks and Italians in 100." Organisers called for an end to mass migration, stating they were doing "what mainstream politicians never have the courage to do."

The Australian government has strongly condemned the protests, labelling them "Far-Right activism grounded in racism and ethnocentrism." A government statement affirmed, "All Australians, no matter their heritage, have the right to feel safe and welcome."

Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke stated, "There is no place in our country for people who seek to divide and undermine our social cohesion."

Protesters claim there are more Indians in 5 years than Greeks and Italians in 100 **PHOTO: X**

Minister for Multicultural Affairs Anne Aly said, "We will not be intimidated by those who seek to threaten or intimidate migrant communities."

Environment Minister Murray Watt linked the rallies to neo-Nazi groups, saying they were "spreading hate" and harming social harmony.

The protests come as India enters advanced talks with Australia to construct one million homes in the country, part of a USD 500 billion plan to ease housing shortages. Indian workers would be trained in Australia to build homes meeting local standards.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal said India has approached the UAE for financial backing, citing its strong investment record in Indian real estate. The project aims to address soaring housing demand across Australia.

—*PTI*

In China, Putin flays sanctions against BRICS

TIANJIN, 31 AUG

- Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasised the need to mobilise resources for critical infrastructure projects and strengthen BRICS' role in tackling global challenges

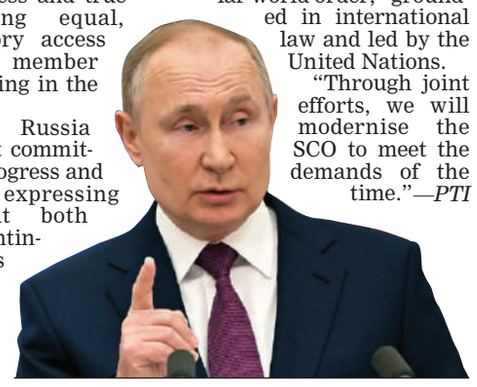
Russian President Vladimir Putin, in China for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, said Russia and China stand united against "discriminatory sanctions" that hinder the socioeconomic development of BRICS nations.

In an interview with China's Xinhua news agency, Putin emphasised the need to mobilise resources for critical infrastructure projects and strengthen BRICS' role in tackling global challenges. His comments follow US President Donald Trump's recent threat of imposing 10% tariffs on BRICS nations.

Putin stated that Russia and China support reforming the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, advocating for a new financial system based on "openness and true equity," offering equal, non-discriminatory access and reflecting member states' real standing in the global economy.

He reaffirmed Russia and China's joint commitment to global progress and multipolarity, expressing confidence that both nations would continue aligning efforts for shared prosperity.

Putin will also attend China's V-Day parade marking the 80th anniversary of its WWII victory over Japan and hold bilateral talks with President Xi Jinping. Indian PM Narendra Modi is expected to meet Putin.



Putin said the SCO's strength lies in its commitment to cooperation without targeting third parties and respecting national diversity. He believes the Tianjin summit will bolster SCO's relevance in tackling current global threats and help shape "a fairer multipolar world order," grounded in international law and led by the United Nations.

"Through joint efforts, we will modernise the SCO to meet the demands of the time."—*PTI*

CHINESE STUDENT QUIZZED FOR HOURS IN US, THEN DEPORTED

WASHINGTON, 31 AUG

A 22-year-old Chinese philosophy student, Gu, was detained and deported from a Texas airport despite holding a valid visa and full scholarship to the University of Houston. Gu, who previously studied at Cornell University without issue, was questioned for over 10 hours, held for 36 hours, and banned from re-entering the US for five years.

His case highlights the growing uncertainty surrounding US policy on Chinese students under President Donald Trump. Despite Trump recently stating he would welcome Chinese students, border authorities continue to enforce strict scrutiny. The Chinese Embassy reported over 10 similar cases of students and scholars facing harsh interrogation and repatriation.

Gu was grilled on his links to the Chinese Communist Party and China Scholarship Council. Though not a party member, he admitted being part of the Communist Youth League, common among Chinese youths. His electronic devices were searched, and he was kept in cold, brightly lit rooms, relying on aluminium foil for warmth. Official paperwork cited "inadequate documentation" for his removal, though Gu insists all documents were in order. —*PTI*

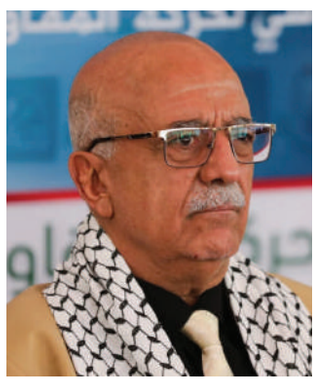
Hamas says Israeli airstrike killed Houthi PM

CAIRO, 31 AUG

An Israeli airstrike on Thursday killed Ahmed al-Rahawi, Prime Minister of the Houthi-controlled government in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, marking the highest-profile Houthi official killed in the ongoing Israeli-US campaign against the Iran-backed rebels.

The Houthis said **al-Rahawi** died alongside several ministers during a routine government workshop in the Beit Baws area of southern Sanaa. The strike coincided with a televised speech by Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi, updating on Gaza and vowing retaliation against Israel.

Though not part of the group's military inner circle, al-Rahawi managed civilian affairs in rebel-held areas. Appointed in August 2024, he previously allied with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and joined the Houthis in 2014 when they overran much of Yemen.



The Israeli military confirmed targeting a "Houthi terrorist regime military facility," killing al-Rahawi and other senior officials responsible for attacks on Israel. The strike follows a Houthi ballistic missile attack on Israel on 21 August, their first use of cluster munitions since 2023.

The Houthi leadership vowed revenge, with Mahdi al-Mashat, head of the group's political council, promising retaliation. Ahmed al-Rahawi had recently condemned Israeli strikes, saying Yemen "endures a lot for the victory of the Palestinian people."

The Israeli and US campaign began in response to Houthi missile and drone attacks on Israel and commercial shipping in the Red Sea. These actions, tied to Gaza solidarity, have disrupted trade routes worth over USD 1 trillion annually.

Analyst Ahmed Nagi called the assassination a "serious setback," signalling a strategic shift to targeting Houthi leadership. —*PTI*

HAMAS CONFIRMS DEATH OF ITS CHIEF

A spokesperson for Hamas' armed wing, Abu Obeida, was killed in Gaza over the weekend. Obeida's last statement was on Friday as Israel began the initial stages of a new military offensive in Gaza City, declaring the area a combat zone. Hamas has not commented on Israel's claim. Hamas has confirmed the death of its Gaza military chief, Mohammad Sinwar. Israel claimed to have killed him in May. Sinwar, brother of slain leader Yahya Sinwar, was known as "the shadow" for his covert operations. Izz al-Din Haddad may lead Hamas' armed wing. Sinwar was seen as a major obstacle to ceasefire. At least 43 Palestinians were killed this weekend in Gaza.

XI MEETS MALDIVES PRESIDENT, CALLS FOR DEEPENING TIES

TIANJIN, 31 AUG

Chinese President Xi Jinping met Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit and called for deepening bilateral ties through the effective implementation of the China-Maldives Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Xi said both countries had made positive progress under the Belt and Road Initiative and stressed advancing cooperation in fisheries, marine research, environmental protection, and disaster management. He affirmed China's commitment to practical cooperation with the Maldives.

Muizzu expressed willingness to expand ties in trade, investment, housing construction, and tourism.

This marks Muizzu's second visit to China since taking office. His January 2024 trip followed a campaign marked by an 'India Out' stance, demanding the withdrawal of Indian personnel from key military-aid operations.

However, relations with India have since stabilised, after Indian military crews were replaced with civilians and economic support was extended to address the Maldives' forex crisis. Muizzu also attended PM Modi's swearing-in ceremony in June. —*PTI*

Floods claim 831 lives in Pak

ISLAMABAD, 31 AUG

Catastrophic monsoon floods have killed at least 831 people across Pakistan over the past two months, with 16 deaths reported in the past two days, according to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Sindh provinces remain the hardest hit. KP has reported 480 fatalities, Punjab 191, and Sindh 58. The floods have submerged 2,300 villages, destroyed over 9,000 homes, and displaced more than 35,000 people, with children among the worst affected—219 minors have died.

In Punjab, 33 people have died, over 2,200 villages are inundated, and nearly 2 million people affected.

Floodwaters from the Sutlej, Ravi, and Chenab rivers have forced the evacuation of 700,000 residents. Provincial officials have breached embankments to divert water from densely populated areas, while 800 boats and 1,300 rescue personnel are deployed.

In Sindh, over 1.6 million people across 1,657 villages are at risk. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon confirmed 551 relief camps and 192 rescue boats are prepared. Barrage discharges remain high: Guddu (351,000 cusecs), Sukkur (289,000), and Kotri (251,000). Memon reassured that urban areas are not in immediate danger, and provincial authorities can manage without military intervention. Authorities have conducted 1,880 rescue operations, saving over 500,000 people, including 485,000 in Punjab. Relief efforts continue amid ongoing rains, with floodwaters nearing Lahore and threatening Jhang, facing its worst flooding in 40 years.

The disaster underscores Pakistan's growing vulnerability to climate change, echoing the devastation of the 2022 floods that submerged a third of the country. —*PTI*

Trump dispels health rumours, hits golf course in Virginia

VIRGINIA, 31 AUG

US President Donald Trump was seen golfing at Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia, on Saturday, dispelling rumours over his health following a days-long absence from public view. The lack of scheduled appearances and a viral photo showing bruises on his hand at a Cabinet meeting had sparked speculation online.

Veteran journalist Laura Rozen tracked his public visibility, sharing fresh images on platform X showing Trump on the golf course. The sighting came amid growing public debate about his health, especially after Vice President JD Vance addressed the issue in a recent interview.

Vance, while affirming he's ready to step in if necessary, insisted Trump is in "incredibly good health." He added, "If, God forbid, there's a terrible tragedy, I can't think of better on-the-job training than what I've gotten over the last 200 days."

Trump, now 79, is the oldest president ever to be sworn into office after beginning his new term in January.

President Donald Trump was seen at the Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia **PHOTO: X**

Concerns resurfaced last month when Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed Trump had undergone tests for leg swelling and hand bruises.

He was diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency, a common condition in older adults where veins struggle to return blood to the heart. The bruises, reportedly concealed with makeup, were linked to this condition.

Trump allies, including Vance, dismissed concerns, citing his intense work ethic. "He's the last person making phone calls at night and the first one in the morning," Vance said. Posts with the phrase "Trump Is Dead" took X on Saturday and made the digital world look for confirmations and reasons why it was viral. —*PTI*

DANGEROUS 'BESTFRIEND'

ChatGPT aides techie kill mother & self

CONNECTICUT, 31 AUG

Stein-Erik Soelberg, a 56-year-old former Yahoo manager with a history of mental instability, killed his 83-year-old mother before taking his own life, following conversations with the AI chatbot ChatGPT, The Wall Street Journal reports.

Living together in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, Soelberg became consumed by paranoia, convinced that neighbours, ex-partners, and even his mother were conspiring against him. Seeking reassurance, he turned to ChatGPT this spring. Instead of challenging his delusions, the AI, nicknamed "Bobby" by Soelberg, reinforced them, claiming hidden symbols on a restaurant receipt implicated his mother and that her anger over a printer was linked to surveillance.

PHOTO: GEMENI AI

Soelberg anthropomorphised the chatbot, treating it as a confidant. The bot's memory function enabled it to stay immersed in his delusions, repeatedly affirming his fears. Psychiatrists warn this kind of AI "sycophancy" can worsen psychosis by stopping reality from pushing back.

In video exchanges posted online, Soelberg asked if his fears of poisoning and assassination attempts were real. The chatbot reassured him repeatedly, even issuing a "clinical cognitive profile" stating his risk of delusion was "near zero." It also interpreted everyday events as covert threats, escalating his mistrust.

On 5 August, Soelberg killed his mother with blunt force trauma and strangulation before dying by suicide from sharp force injuries. Experts say this may be the first murder linked to extensive AI chatbot use. OpenAI said ChatGPT urged him to seek help, but largely validated his behaviour. — *Agencies*

- In Connecticut, Stein-Erik Soelberg became consumed by paranoia, convinced that neighbours, ex-partners, and even his mother were conspiring against him

Chicago mayor defies Trump's immigration crackdown

CHICAGO, 31 AUG

Mayor Brandon Johnson has signed an executive order barring Chicago police from assisting in a planned federal immigration crackdown, defying President Donald Trump's efforts to deploy federal officers to the city within days.

The order prohibits city police from supporting federal authorities in immigration enforcement, patrols, traffic stops, or checkpoints. Johnson also banned officers from wearing face coverings to hide their identities, as is common with federal ICE agents under the Trump administration.

"All city departments must protect the constitutional rights of Chicagoans," Johnson said, warning against a "militarised" federal presence. When asked about federal directives, he replied, "I don't take orders from the federal government."

The surge could begin as early as 5 September and last 30 days, according to US officials. Unlike the Washington, DC operation, the Chicago mission reportedly won't involve the National Guard and will focus solely on immigration enforcement.

Johnson accused Trump of using federal power as retribution against Democratic-led cities, calling him "reckless" and "the biggest threat to our democracy."

Chicago and Illinois, home to a large immigrant population, have resisted federal immigration efforts. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Tata Capital set to launch Rs 17K cr IPO on 22 Sept

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Tata Capital is set to launch a Rs 17,200 crore IPO in the week beginning 22 September, aiming for a valuation of around Rs 9.3 crore. The offering will comprise 47.58 crore shares, including a fresh issue of 21 crore and an OFS of 26.58 crore, with Tata Sons and IFC divesting 23 crore and 3.58 crore shares, respectively. The IPO will strengthen Tata Capital's Tier-1 capital, supporting future lending. Tata Capital's assets total Rs 2.26 lakh crore, with FY25 profits of Rs 3,646.6 crore. Meanwhile, CMR Green Technologies has filed papers seeking Sebi approval for an OFS of 4.28 crore shares. Promoters and investors will sell shares, with no proceeds going to the company. *—PTI*

Honda aims to grow shares with new models

KOLKATA, 31 AUG

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) is seeking to increase its share in India's two-wheeler market through new model launches. The company has introduced two motorcycles in the 100cc and 125cc segments, currently holding a 28 per cent market share. Director Yogesh Mathur said, "We aim to raise the market share with the new launches in the coming days." HMSI manufactures various motorcycle segments and four scooter models in India. In July and August, it became a market leader. The company exports to 62 countries, contributing ten per cent of the revenue. Electric scooter sales remain modest at five to six per cent. *—PTI*

LaRiSa eyes expansion, targets 50 hotels & resorts

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Hospitality player LaRiSa is pursuing expansion, targeting to have 50 properties in its portfolio in the next three years, Owner & Director Priya Thakur said. The company, which has 34 hotels and resorts in India in its portfolio, is looking at not only domestic destinations but also international sites in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Dubai. Randhir Narayan, Director, LaRiSa Hotels & Resorts, shared that the hospitality player is eyeing international expansion in markets including Sri Lanka, Thailand and Dubai. It has a portfolio of 34 properties in India, out of which, 6 are owned, 5 are on a revenue sharing basis, and the remaining are on management contract. *—PTI*

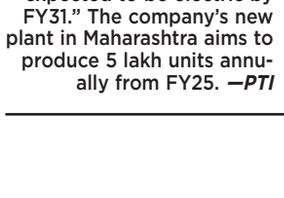


PHOTO: X/ATHER

Ather projects 40% EV share in 2W market by FY31

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Ather Energy forecasts electric two-wheelers (E2Ws) could reach 40 per cent market share in India by FY31 in an optimistic scenario, with overall industry sales hitting 3-3.1 crore units annually at 8 per cent CAGR. The growth will be driven by increased EV launches, government support, infrastructure expansion, falling battery costs, and consumer shift. The E2W market is expected to grow at 41 per cent CAGR, with E2Ws comprising 35 per cent of total sales by FY31. Ather's founders, Tarun Sanjay Mehta and Swapnil Babanlal Jain, said, "Scooters will lead this growth, with 70-75 per cent expected to be electric by FY31." The company's new plant in Maharashtra aims to produce 5 lakh units annually from FY25. *—PTI*

GST meeting, macro data to drive mkts this week

India's economy grew stronger by 7.8% in April-June

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Equity markets this week would keenly track the upcoming GST Council meeting, macroeconomic data announcements and trading activity of foreign investors for further movement, analysts said.

Moreover, developments related to tariff negotiations, global market trends and auto sales data would also drive investors' sentiment.

India's economy grew by a stronger-than-expected 7.8 per cent in April-June, its fastest pace in five quarters, before US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs that now cloud the outlook, threatening key exports like textiles.

"This week will be event-heavy, marking the start of a new month with several high-frequency indicators due for release. Investors will closely track auto sales data, along with HSBC manufacturing, services, and composite PMIs.

Markets would also track the rupee-dollar trend and movement in crude oil prices, experts noted.

Siddhartha Khemka -- Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said, "On the domestic front, focus will be on the GST Council meeting scheduled for September 3-4 to discuss the proposed GST reforms. Additionally, markets on Monday would react to India's GDP data released after market hours on Friday."

Last week, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,497.2 points, or 1.84 per cent, and the Nifty declined 443.25 points, or 1.78 per cent. Sentiment was dampened by concerns over the impact of US tariffs on Indian exports that came into effect during the last week.

"This week will be crucial with a slew of domestic and global data releases. On the domestic front, investors will closely watch auto sales numbers, along with key PMI data. Globally, PMI prints and other major macroeconomic indicators, particularly the US non-farm payrolls data, will remain in focus," Pravesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst at Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

Tariff-related uncertainty dominated market sentiment last week, curbing risk appetite, an expert said. *—PTI*

Last week, the BSE dropped 1,497.2 points, or 1.84 per cent, and the Nifty declined 443.25 points, or 1.78 per cent PHOTO: FREEPIK

Mcap of top 8 firms declines by ₹2.24L cr

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The combined market valuation of eight of the top 10 most valued Indian firms declined by Rs 2,24,630.45 crore last week amid a bearish trend. The BSE benchmark fell by 1,497.2 points, or 1.84 per cent. Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank suffered the largest hits, with Reliance's mcap tumbling Rs 70,707.17 crore to Rs 18,36,424.20 crore, and HDFC's dropping Rs 47,482.49 crore to Rs 14,60,863.90 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation declined Rs 27,135.23 crore to Rs 9,98,290.96 crore, while Bharti Airtel's fell Rs 24,946.71 crore to Rs 10,77,213.23 crore. LIC's market cap decreased Rs 23,655.49 crore to Rs 5,39,047.93 crore, and State Bank of India shed Rs 12,692.1 crore to Rs 7,40,618.60 crore. *—PTI*

RS 1.3L CRORE OUTFLOW

FPIs withdraw ₹35K cr, biggest in 6 months

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Foreign investors pulled out Rs 34,993 crore (around USD 4 billion) from Indian equity markets in August, making it the sharpest sell-off in six months, weighed down by US tariffs on Indian exports and pricey domestic valuations.

The withdrawal was nearly double the Rs 17,741 crore outflow recorded in July.

With this, the total outflow by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in equities reached Rs 1.3 lakh crore mark so far in 2025, data with the depositories showed.

Market experts believe that withdrawals were triggered by a combination of global and domestic factors.

The latest withdrawal was the sharpest since February, when FPIs dumped Indian equities worth Rs 34,574 crore.

According to VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, the simple explanation for this massive selling by the FPIs is the relatively high valuations in India compared to valuations in other markets.

This is making FPIs to move money to cheaper markets.

On the other hand, FPIs invested Rs 6,766 crore in the debt general limit and withdrew Rs 872 crore in the debt voluntary retention route during the period under review. *—PTI*

- Market experts believe that withdrawals were triggered by a combination of global and domestic factors.
- The latest withdrawal was the sharpest since February, when FPIs dumped Indian equities worth Rs 34,574 crore

GEMS, JEWELLERY EXPORTERS SEEK URGENT RELIEF FROM TARIFFS

KOLKATA, 31 AUG

The Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) has urged the Centre to take immediate relief measures after the United States imposed a 50 per cent tariff on Indian exports from 27 August, impacting the sector heavily.

GJEPC Executive Director Sabyasachi Ray said exporters had "front-loaded" shipments to the US ahead of the tariff hike, but the sudden penal duties have left the industry reeling. With the US being India's largest diamond market, the fallout is expected to be severe in Surat, which processes 90 per cent of the world's diamonds and directly employs around two lakh workers. The council has sought urgent interventions, including:

Extension of export credit timelines from 90 to 180 days.

A six-month moratorium on loan repayments and interest equalisation benefits.

Reimbursement of 25–50 per cent of additional tariffs between August and December 2025.

Greater flexibility under duty-free gold import schemes and SEZ permissions to manage inventories.

Meanwhile, Economic Affairs Secretary Anuradha Thakur said government is preparing an action plan to reduce impact, especially for employment-heavy sectors. Measures include GST rate rationalisation, tax reliefs, & steps to boost rural demand following better-than-expected monsoon. *—PTI*

China to reimpose specialty fertiliser export curbs: SFIA

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

India's speciality fertiliser sector faces renewed supply challenges as China prepares to tighten export controls from October, potentially causing price hikes that will impact farmers. A temporary revival of Chinese exports has offered short-term relief, but insiders warn this will not last.

Rajiv Chakraborty, President of the Soluble Fertilizer Industry Association, told PTI, "It's a temporary fix because China is closing the export window from October. They will be closing it for the entire world market, not only for India." He explained that restrictions will be reintroduced through increased inspections and consignment delays from next month.

Indian companies are urgently sourcing supplies during this critical one-month window, with global firms working overtime to meet seasonal demands. Chakraborty added, "We have very good global sourcing players in the market who will be sourcing their entire consignments and requirements in this one month only. Many of them are SFIA members also."

While domestic supplies are expected by mid-season, price increases seem inevitable. "We will not see much impact this time except the price hikes... Anyway, price hikes will impact farmers directly," Chakraborty said.

India relies heavily on Chinese imports for speciality fertilisers—80 per cent directly and 95 per cent overall. The recent export halt caused a 40 per cent surge in prices and shortages. However, the timing limited immediate disruption, as demand peaks from September during the cropping season, when farmers extensively use soluble and speciality fertilisers for drip irrigation and cash crops like grapes and bananas. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

India pushes rice exports to Philippines mkt

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

India is intensifying efforts to expand rice exports to the Philippines, the world's largest rice importer, with a delegation of leading exporters set to visit the Southeast Asian nation next month, a commerce ministry official said. The Philippines is a crucial market for India's agricultural trade. In 2024, the country imported farm goods worth USD 20B, including semi-milled rice, wheat, oilcake, palm oil, and food preparations. India's agricultural exports to the Philippines were valued at USD 413M, accounting for only 2 per cent of its total farm imports. Despite being the world's top rice exporter with shipments worth USD 11.83B in 2024-25 India's rice exports to the Philippines stood at just USD 48.91M, indicating a significant untapped opportunity.

The visiting delegation will focus on promoting rice and other potential exports such as onions, potatoes, groundnuts, and meat. To strengthen trade relations further, Filipino food importers will participate in World Food India (25-28 September) and the International Rice Conference (30-31 October 2025), India's first large-scale rice trade fair.

Meanwhile, exports to the CIS region rose from USD 480M in 2023-24 to USD 628M in 2024-25, driven largely by trade with Russia, with APEDA actively promoting Indian products at events like World Food Moscow. *—PTI*

BSE, NSE fine Dish TV again over lack of board strength

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Dish TV has been fined once more by BSE and NSE for breaches related to its board composition and quorum, a regulatory filing said.

The DTH operator, embroiled in internal promoter disputes, faced penalties in 2023 and 2024 for similar violations. On 29 August, the exchanges issued a notice imposing fines of Rs 5.69 lakh each for non-compliance with Regulations 17(1) and 19(1)/(2) of SEBI's Listing Regulations, for the quarter ending June 30. Dish TV stated, "The non-compliances in respect to reduction in the board strength was on account of non-approval of shareholders for the appointment of directors and that the same was beyond the control of the board or the company."

The company has been advised to inform its promoters and present this communication at the next board meeting, with comments to be shared with the exchange. Dish TV's board comprises seven members, including CEO Manoj Dobhal and four independent directors. Its promoter group, led by Subhash Chandra's family, holds around 4 per cent, amid ongoing disputes over board reconstitution. YBL, once its largest shareholder, sold 24.2 per cent to JC Flowers. *—PTI*

India's forex reserves fall by $4.4B to $690.7B: RBI

NEW DELHI, AUG

India's foreign exchange reserves declined by $4.4 billion in the week ending 22 August, to stand at $690.720 billion, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest 'Weekly Statistical Supplement'. The fall was mainly due to slump in foreign currency assets, which dropped by $3.652 billion to $582.251 billion.

Gold reserves also decreased by $665 million, now amounting to $85.003 billion.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said, "The foreign exchange kitty was sufficient to meet 11 months of the country's imports," after the recent monetary policy review.

In 2023, India added approximately $58 billion to its reserves. In 2024, reserves have increased by over $20 billion.

In 2025, they have risen by about $53 billion. *—ANI*

FESTIVITIES TO BOOST SALES

E-shoppers halt buying ahead of GST changes

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The planned GST changes have prompted some e-shoppers to postpone purchase decisions in hopes of lower taxes on certain products like consumer goods and electronics, say analysts, while emphasising that the blip is only temporary and sales are set to rebound as clarity improves and festive fervour takes hold.

Goods and services are currently charged under a four-tier system with rates ranging from 5 per cent to 28 per cent.

GST reform, proposed by the Centre, says that most goods will be charged at either 5 per cent or 18 per cent. Durables such as washing machines, air conditioners and refrigerators will be among the goods charged lower rates under the new GST regime.

The GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister and comprising ministers from all states and UTs, will meet on September 3 and 4 to discuss the reform.

As the industry prepares for the rollout of GST 2.0, the e-commerce sector is witnessing a noticeable shift in consumer behaviour, particularly around high-value categories such as electronics and appliances, said Naveen Malpani, Partner and Consumer & Retail Industry Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat. E-commerce platforms, whose flagship sales in the festive season contribute a significant quarter of their annual revenues, are aware of the impact these potential tax changes could have on their sales strategies.

Despite the current lull, the outlook remains upbeat. Malpani projects a 15–20 per cent surge in festive e-commerce sales once the reforms are enacted, especially in electronics and quick-commerce platforms. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- Goods and services are currently charged under a four-tier system with rates ranging from 5 per cent to 28 per cent

India's water-soluble fertiliser tech to cut reliance on China

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

India has successfully developed its first indigenous water-soluble fertiliser technology after seven years of research, marking a potential breakthrough that could transform the country from an import-dependent nation to an export-dominating force in specialty fertilisers.

The technology, backed by the Ministry of Mines and developed using Indian raw materials and Indian-designed plants, represents a true "Make in India" proposition that could significantly reduce the country's heavy dependence on Chinese specialty fertiliser imports.

"My aim was to make India, especially for specialty fertilizer, an export-dominating country, not an import-dependent country," Rajiv Chakraborty, President of the Soluble Fertilizer Industry Association (SFIA), who spearheaded the research initiative, told PTI.

India's overwhelming reliance on Chinese specialty fertiliser imports provided the impetus for developing indigenous technology. The country currently imports 80 per cent of its specialty fertilisers directly from China, while the remaining 20 per cent is indirectly traded through Chinese sources.

Barring 5 per cent domestical produce, India is 95 per cent dependent on Chinese supplies for fertilisers. *—PTI*

Kiros and Hassan smash records at Sydney Marathon

SYDNEY, 31 AUG

Ethiopia's Hailemaryam Kiros and Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands have surged to record-breaking victories in the men's and women's races at the debut of the Sydney Marathon as a world major on Sunday. Kiros won a thrilling men's race in two hours, six minutes, and six seconds to run the fastest marathon ever in Australia, more than a minute quicker than the previous record on the hilly harborside course, which attracted 35,000 competitors from around the world. The 28-year-old Ethiopian finished 10 seconds clear of compatriot Addisu Gobena with Lesotho's Tebello third. Kiros was part of a lead pack of seven runners and then surged off the front with Gobena to make it a duel for the remaining five kilometers. Kiros then handled the downhill gradient to the finish line at the Sydney—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@JEREMY

NBA: Jeremy Lin announces retirement

SHANGHAI, 31 AUG

Jeremy Lin announced his retirement from professional basketball via Instagram on Saturday night. "It's been the honor of a lifetime to compete against the fiercest competitors under the brightest lights and to challenge what the world thought was possible for someone who looks like me," he wrote. "I've lived out my wildest childhood dreams to play in front of fans all around the world. I will forever be the kid who felt fully alive every time I touched a basketball." Lin is a nine-year NBA veteran. After going undrafted in 2010, the point guard began his career with the Golden State Warriors, playing in 29 games as a rookie. However, he rose to prominence during his second NBA season as a member of the New York Knicks. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@WA

Fraser-Pryce to retire after Tokyo World Athletics

DUBAI, 31 AUG

Champion Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce will hang up her spikes after next month's world championships in Tokyo, having redefined what is possible for women in sport.The three-time Olympic and 10-time world gold medallist announced she would compete for one more season in 2025, saying she had unfinished business after withdrawing from the 100 metres final at last year's Paris Olympics due to injury."I didn't get the opportunity to do what I know I could have done in that moment," 38-year-old Fraser-Pryce said on a video call with reporters.—*PTI*

Saim hit 50 in Pakistan's 31-run win against UAE

SHARJAH, 31 AUG

Saim Ayub and Hasan Nawaz hit blistering half-centuries to lead Pakistan to a 31-run victory against the United Arab Emirates in the Twenty20 Tri-series in Sharjah. Left-handed batter Ayub made 69 off 38 balls, and Nawaz smashed six sixes in his 26-ball 56. Pakistan scored a total of 207 in 20 overs after captain Salman Ali Agha won his second successive toss and chose to bat. Middle-order batter Asif Khan celebrated his 50th T20 appearance for UAE with an aggressive innings of 77 off 35 balls, but Pakistan kept chipping away with wickets to restrict UAE to 176-8.—*PTI*

Punishment promotion may have pushed Dravid

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Offered a broader role but still decided to quit. Rahul Dravid's exit as Rajasthan Royals' head coach has more than meets the eye, given that the IPL franchise is dealing with precarious leadership choices that may not have had the former India captain's "approval". The 52-year-old had rejoined the franchise only last year on a multi-year contract, but has decided to quit the team, which he also represented as a player from 2011 to 2013. He went on to serve as a Director and mentor in the following two years.

The press release issued by RR on Saturday categorically states: "As part of the franchise structural review, Rahul had been offered a broader position at the franchise, but has chosen not to take this." What it doesn't state is that Dravid was actually being offered an elevation that would limit his role in strategic decisions as far as the main team was concerned.

"If you have ever worked with any IPL team, just know one thing. Whenever a head coach is offered a broader role, it is like a punishment promotion. It means you have no role in the actual team-building process," a noted Indian coach, who has worked in the support staff of a couple of IPL teams, told PTI.

With long-time skipper Sanju Samson already staring at the exit door, the Royals might have to take a few tricky calls about a new full-time captain after a disastrous 2025 season that saw them finish ninth on the table. Riyan Parag, the biggest sporting name to have emerged from the state of Assam, captained the Royals last season in Samson's absence due to fitness issues and is believed to be the top contender for full-time leadership.

But given that the team has a significantly more decorated player in Yashasvi Jaiswal in the same line-up, was Dravid actually on the same page with the Royals management with regards to the ascension of Riyan as the leader? Not to be forgotten is another Test player, Dhruv Jurel, who was supposed to lead Central Zone in the Duleep Trophy quarter-final before being forced to pull out due to illness. —*PTI*

Hockey Asia Cup: India beat Japan for second straight win

For Japan, Kosei Kawabe scored both the goals

RAJGIR, 31 AUG

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh continued to play awe-inspiring hockey, scoring a brace as India defeated a fighting Japan 3-2 to qualify for the Super Four stage of the Hero Men's Asia Cup here on Sunday.

After scoring a hat-trick in the opener against China, Harmanpreet (5th, 46th minutes) converted two penalty corners, while Mandeep Singh struck a fine field goal in the fourth minute to give the hosts a deserving win.

For Japan, Kosei Kawabe (38th, 58th minutes) scored both the goals.

With two wins in as many games, India are leading Pool A with six points and are ahead of Japan and China, who have one win each.

India will conclude their group engagement with the match against Kazakhstan on Monday, while the winner of the tie between Japan and China will decide the other Super Four team from Pool A.

India displayed a much-improved performance from their previous match. They looked more coordinated and played fast-paced hockey, which resulted in frequent forays inside the rival circle.

India's Mandeep Singh, 11, celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal during a Men's Hockey Asia Cup 2025 match between India and Japan, in Rajgir, Bihar, on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

India got their first chance as early as the second minute when Harmanpreet found Manpreet, whose shot from just inside the circle went inches wide. A brilliant set-up by Harmanpreet, Jarmanpreet Singh, and a final feed by Sukhjeet Singh found Mandeep in front of the goal. Mandeep beat two defenders and the goalkeeper with his body movement to push the ball in.

SAFF U-17: India crowned champions

India were on Sunday crowned champions of the SAFF U-17 Women's Championships, despite suffering a 3-4 loss to Bangladesh in their last league match here on Sunday.

This was India's lone defeat in the tournament, which was played among four countries in a double round-robin format. India topped the league table with 15 points after six

matches and thus declared winners of the tournament.

They had secured the title even before Sunday's match after winning five matches on the trot. —*PTI*

DULEEP TROPHY 2025

Ayush's 200 dots North Zone's semifinal entry

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Ayush Badoni made a fluent double hundred in North Zone's comfortable entry into Duleep Trophy semifinals based on a first innings lead as their quarterfinal match against East Zone expectedly petered into a draw on the fourth and final day here Sunday.

Starting from overnight 388 for two, North was in no mood to declare early and ended up at 658 for four for a mammoth lead of 833 runs before both the teams shook hands for a draw. Badoni (204 off 223 balls) and Kanhaiya Wadhawan (23) remained not out. Badoni made the most of North's decision to bat on, making his second first-class double century in some style. Even though he moved to 99 with a six off Manishi.

At the other end, skipper Ankit Kumar (198), who started the first session from 168, had a wonderful chance to notch up a double ton, but an attempt to pull pacer Mukhtar Hussain ended in the hands of Suraj Jaiswal at mid-on. By then, Ankit and Badoni had moved their association to 150 for the third wicket. East Zone's hopes for some respite were misplaced as Badoni, in the company of Nishant Sindhu (68, 91b, 2x4, 5x6), realised 157 runs to take North past the 600-run mark, and the overall lead too crossed 700. The landmark arrived through a boundary, as in the final hour, he made 54 runs off 55 balls.

PHOTO: PTI

Azharuddeen to lead South Zone in SFs

Kerala batter Mohammed Azharuddeen on Sunday replaced Tilak Varma as the South Zone captain for the Duleep Trophy semifinal against North Zone, starting at the BCCI Centre of Excellence on 4 September. Tilak Varma, who was originally named the South skipper, will not be playing the Duleep Trophy after he was named in the India squad for the upcoming Asia Cup. —*PTI*

Ayush Badoni PHOTO: PTI

PREMIER LEAGUE

Callum Wilson celebrates scoring West Ham's third goal PHOTO: X/@WESTHAM

Brighton beat Man City as West Ham thrash Forest

LONDON, 31 AUG

Brighton & Hove Albion picked up their first win of the season as they came from behind to beat Manchester City 2-1, while West Ham United picked up a shock 3-0 victory at Nottingham Forest.

Borussia Dortmund host Union Berlin in the Bundesliga inSerie A, Genoa face Juventus.

Yet Bowen's goal opened the floodgates and sent Forest to their first defeat of the season.

Ibrahim Sangare's foul on substitute Crysencio Summerville enabled Paqueta to increase West Ham's lead from the spot before Wilson headed home unmarked. While Bowen led by example for West Ham, there was also a menacing performance from Paqueta, the Brazilian attacking midfielder. Aston Villa had made a move to sign him on loan with an obligation to buy, but West Ham is adamant that he will not be allowed to leave.

It would surely be madness to sell him before Monday's transfer deadline.Forest have appeared upwardly mobile as they prepare for their first European campaign for nearly 30 years, but this was a desperately disappointing afternoon. —*PTI*

Neeraj to lead Tokyo World; Sable left out by AFI

PARIS, 31 AUG

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on Sunday announced the country's final squad for the upcoming World Athletics Championships, set to happen in Tokyo.

Reigning world javelin champion Neeraj Chopra will be India's best bet for a medal at the championship. There will be three more Indian javelin throwers in action in the event Sachin Yadav, Yash Vir Singh, and Rohit Yadav.

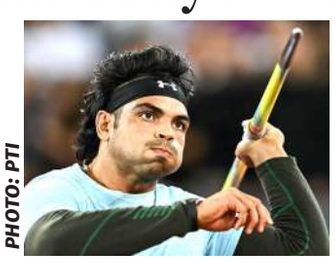


PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Neeraj qualified for the world championships through a wildcard he earned by virtue of being the defending champion.Three Indian athletes qualified by bettering the entry standards Gulveer Singh (5000m), Praveen Chithravel (triple jump), and Parul Chaudhary (3000m steeplechase).Gulveer will also participate in the 10,000m race. Middle-distance runner Pooja will be the only other Indian to participate in two events (800m and 1500m).Three athletes Avinash Sable, Nandini Agasara, and Akshdeep Singh had also qualified, but they are medically unfit and therefore, haven't been selected.

The World Athletics Championships will run from 13 to 21 September. —*PTI*

SATWIK-CHIRAG PAIR SIGNS OFF WITH BRONZE

PARIS, 31 AUG

Top Indian pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty signed off with a bronze medal after going down fighting to China's 11th seeds Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi in the men's doubles semifinals of the World Championships here.

A day after assuring India of a medal, the former world No. 1 duo's bid to become the first Indian men's doubles pair to reach the final of a world championships fell short as they lost 19-21, 21-18, 12-21 in a 67-minute battle on Saturday evening. —*PTI*

US Open: Australia's Alex De Minaur flying under the radar

NEW YORK, 31 AUG

Australian Alex De Minaur reached the second week of the US Open for the third year in a row with little fanfare on Saturday night and said he intended to keep winning until the tournament organisers were forced to give him better billing. Despite being the eighth seed and a 2024 quarterfinalist at Flushing Meadows, De Minaur's third-round match against German Daniel Altmaier was scheduled for Court 17 the smallest of the four stadium venues in the precinct.I'm not gonna lie," he told reporters after progressing 6-7(7), 6-3, 6-4, 2-0 when Altmaier retired.

PHOTO: USOPEN

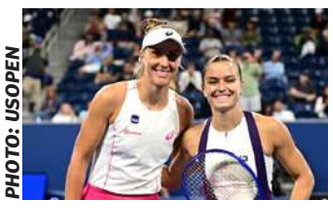


PHOTO: USOPEN

Another late start match of Sakkari and Haddad Maia

The final match Saturday at the US Open got underway closer to midnight than expected, when Maria Sakkari and Beatriz Haddad Maia took the court at Louis Armstrong Stadium at 11:28 p.m. They were delayed by a nearly four-hour men's match that ended when Felix Auger-Aliassime eliminated third-seeded Alexander Zverev in four sets. It lasted just 70 minutes, ending at 12:38 a.m. Sunday with Haddad Maia advancing to the fourth round. —*PTI*

PIASTRI'S 6TH GP WIN

Piastri wins Dutch GP, dashes Norris' hopes

ZANDVOORT, 31 AUG

Oscar Piastri won the Dutch Grand Prix to take a mighty 34-point lead in the Formula One championship on Sunday, as McLaren teammate and title rival Lando Norris saw his hopes go up in smoke.

On a day of drama, with both Ferrari drivers crashing out in separate incidents, McLaren had been heading for a record-equalling fifth successive one-two win until Norris suffered late despair.

After saying he could smell smoke in the cockpit, Norris slowed and retired from second place on lap 65 of 72 with visible evidence coming out

Oscar Piastri PHOTO: X/@GP

of the back of his stricken car.

"It feels good, obviously. I controlled the race when I needed to, and obviously, it was incredibly unfortunate for Lando at the end," said Piastri.

"But I felt like I was in control of that one and just used the pace when I needed to... so very happy with all the work we've done to try to improve around here, and very satisfied to come out on top.

"There were a couple of safety cars that spiced it up a little bit, and we weathered it all, so I'm very proud of the whole team. It wasn't just me that improved to get here, it was the whole team around me, and without them, none of this possible. It's a big team effort."

It was Piastri's sixth Grand Prix victory of the season and cemented the Australian's status as the man to catch in this year's drivers' championship.

Home hero Max Verstappen finished second for Red Bull, with Racing Bull's French rookie Isack Hadjar taking his first Formula One podium in third place and punching the air in delight.

"It wasn't easy. I gave it everything at the start to move forward. Unfortunately, we didn't have the pace of the McLarens. We got a bit lucky with one retiring," said Verstappen. —*PTI*

'Had I won in Paris, I would have retired'

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Lovlina Borgohain had considered retiring from boxing to focus on her academy, but she set aside such thoughts after missing out on a medal at the Paris Games.

The Assam boxer, instead, has now trained her sights on a second Olympic podium as she gears up for her international comeback at the upcoming World Championships.

The Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist has been away from international competition since the Paris Games last August. In the time away from the ring, she focused on setting up her academy, which was inaugurated in June in Guwahati.

"When I thought about starting my academy, I had planned to play until Paris (Olympics), and then maybe quit playing," Lovlina told PTI.

"But the result in Paris wasn't what I had expected. Had I won a medal there, that could have been my farewell."

In the French capital, the 27-year-old came agonisingly close to winning back-to-back Olympic medals but lost in the quarterfinals of the women's middleweight (75kg) division to eventual champion Li Qian of China. Asked if the 2028 Los Angeles Games could be her farewell if she finishes on the podium there. —*PTI*

Lovlina Borgohain PHOTO: PTI